Problems of COMMUNISM

Ideology under Khrushchev

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

Soviet Union: Model for Asia?

ALEX INKELES
OLEG HOEFFDING

The Soviet Theater

JUERGEN RUEHLE

An End to the Iron Curtain?

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NO. 6 Vol. VIII
Nov-Dec 1959

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NUMBER 6 VOL. VIII
NOV-DEC 1959

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Outside the United States, *Problems of Communism* may be obtained from the nearest office of the United States Information Service. For sale within the United States by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price per copy: $.35. Subscription price: $1.50 a year. Additional $.50 for foreign mailing.

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Khrushchev at the Helm: VI

EDITORS' NOTE: *A common view has it that Khrushchev's concern with conspicuously practical matters, such as corn-growing, industrial production, administrative reforms,* etc., *as well as his pragmatical bent and folksy mentality, bespeak the approaching end of ideology in the USSR. Yet as Mr. Labedz shows in the article below, whatever the direction of its future development Soviet ideology is still very much alive and Khrushchev himself seems continuously obliged to couch his programmatic statements in doctrinal terms. By discussing the differences between the "four stages" of Communist ideology—which might be termed, albeit awkwardly, Plekhanovism, Leninism, Stalinism, and Khrushchevism—Mr. Labedz illuminates the* raison d'être *of current Soviet ideology, as well as the changes evolving in both its content and its role. His article is the ninth in this journal's series on Russia under Khrushchev's leadership.*

Ideology: The Fourth Stage

By Leopold Labedz

MARXISM IN RUSSIA has gone through three stages and now seems to be entering its fourth. The first stage was that of transplantation. Marxism was a doctrine born in the West, and the members of the Russian intelligentsia who adopted it had been for decades subject to Western cultural and political influences. The doctrine emerged in the wake of the German romantic movement, the disenchantment of the intelligentsia with the results of the French revolution, the abortive revolutions of 1848, and the revulsion from the social effects of early industrialization. It contained two essential ingredients that strengthened its appeal to the intelligentsia of a backward country: revolutionary fervor and a chiliastic hope. It called for modernization, and not, like *Narodnichestvo* (populism), for a revival of moribund peasant institutions. But although its millenarianism suited the Russian messianic tradition, the premises of its class-analysis were not in line with Russian revolutionary attitudes, which had little patience with an evolutionary process, even a Marxist one.

Intellectually, however, the early Marxists under Plekhanov emerged victorious from the debate with the *Narodniks,* about what would now be called the "Russian road to socialism." They demonstrated "conclusively" that the hopes of Russian socialism were naive, that the stage of capitalism could not be skipped, that the peasant commune *(obshchina)* was in process of disintegration under the impact of market relationships, that the Russian peasant was not "a communist by nature," and that capitalism had already established itself in Russia and was rapidly developing.

This, the Plekhanov phase of the Marxist movement, came to an end soon; with Lenin's *What is to be Done?* bolshevism—or Leninism—was born. It created the premises for the triumph of the very heresy which Russian Marxism had begun by opposing, the concept

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of jumping the economic stages Marx himself had postulated. The organizational principle of the party "of the new type"—closely knit, revolutionary and highly centralized—was, of course, the most important among these premises, but not the only one.

Marxism in Practice

The second stage in the destinies of Marxism in Russia was that of adaptation. Bolshevism has often been described as a blend of Marxism and populism. This is true but incomplete. Other Marxist trends were also affected by the historical background and environmental pressures in Russia: Mensheviks were often no less "impatient," and it was Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution—the notion that the two classic Marxist revolutions, the "bourgeois" and the "proletarian", could be "telescoped" into one—that was practically implemented by Lenin in October 1917 after his abandonment (in the April Theses) of his previous views on the character and perspectives of the revolution. But there is little doubt that it was in bolshevism that some of the most characteristic ideas of the Populist theoreticians of the 19th century found their safest anchor: Pisarev's utilitarian ethics, Tkachev's attribution of a special role to the revolutionary elite, Nechaev's acceptance of the use of force and fraud as "normal," Lavrov's emphasis on the role of the party, and the general fascination with the idea of the dictatorship of the revolutionary minority. Despite the obvious continuity between bolshevism and its predecessors, however, there is also an element of genuine novelty in Leninism: in the principle of "democratic centralism" it contained the nucleus of a totalitarian chain-reaction.

The third stage, that of implementation, came with the victory of the revolution. The Marxists had "solved" the problem of how to win power in the un-Marxist conditions presented by a proletarian island in a peasant sea; now they were confronted with the problem of exercising that power in a backward country lacking, according to their own Marxist premises, the industrial prerequisites of socialism. The hope, based on these premises, of a "proletarian revolution" in the more advanced countries soon vanished, and the next step beyond the original orthodoxy became inevitable: Stalinism replaced Leninism. Lenin had replaced the Marxist theory of revolution with his own, more practicable theory in the given circumstances. Stalin abandoned other tenets of the original Marxist creed as well.

The process has been referred to as a transition from theory to ideology. But it was both more and less than that. Having suffered a theoretical defeat through its own victory after the revolution in Russia, Marxism was caught up in a vicious circle of theoretical contradictions. It was not the unity but the disunity of theory and practice that began to be embodied in Soviet institutions. The theory therefore could not simply be thrown overboard, while the ideology was retained; both had to undergo a complex transformation. The theory was elevated to the status of a state doctrine; orthodoxy crystallized into a ritual, and policies were justified by invoking first principles that had no relation to the circumstances. It was not that the theory was "betrayed"; it simply became more irrelevant. The facts that did not fit it had to be explained away.

The reason why the theory could not be abondoned and replaced by another was, of course, because the legitimacy of the system itself was based upon it. Therefore subordinate propositions had to be introduced with each new twist of policy; such propositions often logically nullified the original theory, but helped to preserve it by shifting the emphasis from its heuristic aspect (purporting to explain past and current experience) to the future it envisaged. The theory thus acquired an autonomous sphere of existence largely impervious to the facts of the present and therefore invulnerable to logical argument.

Even earlier Marxism, in becoming an ideology of mass movements and acquiring the characteristic features of systems of mass-belief, had come to assume the inadmissibility of doubts lest the faith of the believers be endangered. Despite the fact that *de omnibus dubitandum* was one of Marx's favorite maxims, his followers soon became accustomed to settling their arguments by an appeal to the scriptures, and quotation-mongering became an obligatory game. When the doctrine became the basis of a state, the believers could no longer appeal to the scriptures on their own; interpretations were prescribed by those who controlled the state.

An Ideology, Not a Theory

As a total *Weltanschauung* Marxism was a theory which aspired both to explain the facts of nature and society and at the same time to evaluate those facts. The statements of fact and value were thus intrinsically mixed, and despite its protestations to the contrary, Marxism was from the first an "ideology" in its own sense of the term—that is, a "false consciousness" and not, as it claimed to be, a "scientific theory of socialism." Unlike a scientific theory, it was not ready to revise its assumptions in the light of experience, so that revisionism always presented a mortal danger. Previously Marx-

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ism had merely been "an illusion of an epoch"; after becoming a ruling ideology it was transformed into a falsified consciousness, with all the instruments of the state devoted to this falsification. Indoctrination was geared to fill the gap between experience and theory, not merely to expound a certain system of values. The new scholastic species, the ideological functionaries, performed the task of doctrinal exposition according to the requirements of the moment. Like other casuists before them, they could always find a suitable quotation.

It is this last aspect which led many Western commentators to conclude that under Stalin ideology had become a mere appendage of Machiavellian *Realpolitik* —a cynical camouflage playing no role whatever in political decisions, which were dictated by hard-headed considerations of the interests of the party or the state.

The reality was more complex. It is true that when the "Stalinist school of falsification" replaced the Leninist school of rationalization, ideology seemed to be reduced to a secondary role. But this was partly a matter of degree and partly an optical illusion. Lenin had a strong element of *Realpolitik* in him, without ceasing to be an *ideologue;* Stalin, the "realist politician," aspired all his life to be the supreme ideologist. The question here is not one of personalities. The party could not exist without the ideology providing its doctrinal legitimacy. Ideology may be manipulated to suit policy, but it is still there, not merely reflecting the needs of the rulers but shaping their mentalities as well. Doctrinal rationalization has not ended with Lenin, nor has falsification ended with Stalin.

The Stalinist Legacy

The vicissitudes of "destalinization" and "restalinization" tended to obscure the simple fact that the post-Stalin regime emerged as a continuation of the one he left; all the leaders struggling for the succession were members of the victorious Stalinist faction in the 1920's and 1930's, and the repudiation of its role would have amounted to their repudiating themselves. Khrushchev went furthest in his "secret speech" of 1956 but limited his denunciation to Stalin personally. This stand has since been modified, or at least clarified, in the newly published version of party history, which explicitly approves Stalin's actions in the 1920's and 1930's—with the exception of the Great Purge. Thus the need to legitimize the post-Stalinist regime set the limit to doctrinal change.

Such changes as have been made are presented only as a continuation of Leninist orthodoxy, straightening the path where Stalin strayed from it. This is, of course, quite deceptive. "Khrushchevism," despite historical continuity, is no more a return to Leninism than Stalinism was a straight continuation of it.[1] The new adaptation takes those elements from Lenin's ambiguous legacy that suit its present purposes, as Stalin did in his time, and as Lenin himself did with Marx.

The history of Soviet thought can be regarded as a struggle of doctrine with reality, or as a process of adjustment to intractable reality. When the latter is finally accepted, the doctrinal formula of acceptance is referred to as "the creative development of Marxism." Before such a formula emerges, a period of groping precedes it in which various formulations are thrashed out in esoteric discussions until finally one of them is consecrated in the official orthodoxy. The evolution of such formulas can be traced as precisely as that of a species in a museum of natural history. The Stalinist contributions to the "creative development of Marxism"—"socialism in one country," the theory of the reinforced state, class structure in the socialist society, and the new twists given to the problems of egalitarianism, "the law of value," and the relationship between the economic basis and the ideological superstructure—all of these have a long history of gradual reformulation until they acquired their ultimate shape in the Stalinist dogma. It is possible to trace their emergence to political or economic needs, and to see how in their final form they were related to such needs—with the least apparent damage done to the doctrine.

Yet ideological inconsistencies became routine in the Soviet system and they continue under Khrushchev. There have been obvious signs in recent years of groping for new theoretical adjustments, and now that Khrushchev's writ is law it is probable that some of the new experimental formulas which have been put forward will be proclaimed as his contributions to the "creative development of Marxism." Indeed, the expression is already being used in respect to some such formulations, and if they serve the ideological requirements of the new situation they may become a part of the new theodicy.

The Fourth Stage of Marxism

The Stalinist phase in Soviet ideology was doctrinally characterized as "the building of socialism." Khrushchev has announced that the process is completed and has promised the achievement of communism in the near future. Indeed, according to his pronouncements, the Soviet Union has already entered the "higher stage" and

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[1] See "Lenin and 'Peaceful Coexistence,' " on page 53 of this issue.

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is engaged in attaining the final doctrinal aim, the Communist society.

This may well be the most difficult period for the doctrine. In the past its dynamic appeal was preserved as a result of its teleological view of history and its retention of certain ideas derived from nineteenth-century utopian socialism. However, these elements could not stand up to a confrontation with reality, and therefore the doctrine had to operate "beyond the reality principle" by projecting ultimate aims into the future. Obviously the moment of reckoning would come, should the aims be considered to have been achieved, the historical mission of the proletariat fulfilled, and the *terminus ad quem* of pre-history attained.

Achievement of communism can of course, be repeatedly postponed, but ultimately there are only limited ways out of the doctrinal dilemma. One is for the ideology to become a set of dead formulas, not only to the population at large but to the party as well. It is perfectly obvious, however, that the *apparatchiki* have a vital vested interest in the perpetuation of the ideology. It is this feature that makes Soviet communism historically *sui generis*. In the case of the French Revolution, long before forty years had passed, the revolutionary dynamic had been exhausted, the Jacobin formulas and even Thermidor were forgotten, and "liberté, égalité, fraternité" was becoming a motto for the facades of public buildings (including prisons). Should ideology cease to be an operative factor in the Soviet Union, the party could not hold out for long against divisive social forces and sectional interests. It would be the end of the unity of the political elite and of the permanent revolution from above.

But nothing at the moment warrants such a forecast. The chiliastic element in the ideology cannot be reconciled with "the achievement of communism," but it can be projected beyond the geographic frontiers of the Communist bloc to perpetuate the 'ideological" dynamic. Herein lies one alternative to abandonment of the doctrine. Needless to say, it is incomparably more dangerous to free societies and to the prospects of "peaceful coexistence."

Effects of Ritualization

The outcome is, of course, not predetermined and will depend not only on internal Soviet developments but on outside factors—the courses pursued in the non-Communist world, the direction taken by Chinese revolutionary fervor, *etc.* Internally, the ideological future will depend on the rate of *embourgeoisement* and the degree to which this affects the party. Both the content and the role of ideology are bound to be affected by general social change as the Soviet Union acquires a more mature industrial economy. The party, which is not the ruling social class but the ruling political elite, is aware of these antithetical elements and tries to perpetuate its positon at the top of society by new injections of social mobility. Khrushchev's educational reform and the recent wage and salary changes are two instances of the Bonapartist technique of playing lower strata of the population against the higher to preserve the party's equilibrating position. But such attempts cannot be effective indefinitely. The Soviet social structure is crystallizing, and no amount of permanent revolution from above (especially without terror) can arrest the process in the long run.

With *embourgeoisement* the doctrinaire fanaticism of the *apparatchiki* may subside or they may be corrupted by cynicism. It is clear that as the doctrine to which they adhere has become more ritualistic it has lost its positive content. But if ritual diminishes the meaning of a religion to the believer, it helps on the other hand to preserve the church. Since there are different degrees of initiation according to rank, the ritual sterilization of ideology has varying impacts at different levels of the hierarchy. Eventually the "historical purpose" of Marxist eschatology may cease to be convincing at any level. Even those initiated into the tactical motivation of changes in the party line may cease to regard them as simple teleological detours, necessary to reach the ultimate goal. It has happened before that those charged with the administration of the faith end by losing it.

Soviet *apparatchiki* of today, however, are still far from the sophistication of the Renaissance cardinals. And at their apex is a ruler for whom simplified Marxism is a part of folklore, a vital element which shaped his mentality in the *rabfak* (workers' school), as the popular wisdom of Russian proverbs did before he received his formal education. Here is a very different figure from those of the past.

The Leninist generation of Bolshevik leaders, recruited from the intelligentsia, consisted of ideologues. Stalin, a member of the semi-intelligentsia, resented their intellectual superiority, but aspired himself to provide ideological guidance, entering personally into doctrinal disputes. While it is true that his main venture into philosophy (the celebrated section on dialectical and historical materialism in the fourth chapter of the *Short Course* of the party history) was written with the help of Yudin, until recently Soviet ambassador in Peking, Stalin never left his doctrinal pronouncements entirely to ghost-writers.

Khrushchev on the other hand relies on his *vydvizhentsy* (those promoted from the bench or the plough)

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who are even cruder intellectually than their Stalinist predecessors. He leaves doctrinal formulations to these ideological functionaries, and it is only when a formula is ready for *oformleniie* (final formulation) that he puts his stamp on it. While the appearance is maintained that ideology has acquired a new Supreme Interpreter without whom the system could not properly function, the new interpretation is no longer made by him personally, but rather by the party ideologists. The era of philosopher-kings in the Soviet Union is ended. It is therefore more likely that social factors and forces will become a greater influence in shaping doctrinal change.

Doctrinal Innovations

What specific changes can already be discerned in the content and the role of ideology in this early period of the post-Stalin era, and what is likely to be the physiognomy of the fourth stage of Marxism in Russia?

First—and perhaps inevitably—with the announcement that the ultimate goal of communism was in sight, the ambivalence so characteristic of Marxism and Leninism seems to have become even more marked.

The economic and administrative reforms of Khrushchev have again raised the perennial problems of the theory of state and the law of value. In general Stalin's doctrinal legacy in this area is approved, but with certain important exceptions and modifications. Those of his ideas which have been repudiated are neatly summarized in the *Political Dictionary:*

> ***The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*** **[Stalin's last *opus* of 1952] had a great influence on the elaboration of some theses of the political economy of socialism. At the same time the work contains a series of erroneous and questionable theses, such as for instance the statement that commodity circulation begins to hinder the development of the productive forces of the country and that a gradual transition to natural exchange is necessary; the underestimation of the role of the law of value in the sphere of productivity, in particular in relation to the means of production; the assertion about the inevitability of the contraction of capitalist production after World War II and about the inevitability in contemporary conditions of wars between the capitalist countries.**[2]

In simple language this means that under Khrushchev monetary economy is taken for granted, at least for the time being, and that direct distribution through rationing is not yet contemplated; that the problem of pricing capital goods has been recognized as a problem; that the prospects for capitalism set out in the postwar "Varga controversy" have finally been recognized as fallacious,[3] and that Stalin's hope of wars between the western countries is taken for what it was, a nonsensical fantasy of a paranoidal dictator.

With the greater importance attached to "the law of value," Soviet economic theory has begun to show signs of stirring out of the long slumber into which it had fallen during Stalin's lifetime. Although the Polish and Yugoslav economic revisionists are attacked, and the more heretical Soviet economists (like Kronrod) scorned, there are indications that the pragmatic needs of the Soviet economy in its more mature phase force the acceptance of the economic facts of life, including the problem of the price-mechanism and market relationships.

The Case for a Strong State

In contrast to the critical assessment of Stalin's doctrinal positions in the economic sphere, his contributions to the "creative development of Marxism" in the political sphere are now accepted almost in toto.

After initial waverings in 1956 the Soviet theoreticians reached a new doctrinal equilibrium on the theory of state.

Khrushchev in his "secret speech" condemned as erroneous the doctrinal premise of Stalin's terrorism, his thesis that class struggle grows more intense with the advance of socialism. This thesis had served as a basis for the Stalinist theory of state under socialism; since the internal class struggle was becoming more acute, the state—far from "withering away"—had to grow stronger. (His other ingenuous justification of the strong state was, of course, the concept of "capitalist encirclement.")

During 1956-57 the condemned thesis was referred to in Soviet publications as one of Stalin's mistaken notions, although it was not linked with its logical Marxist corollary concerning the diminishing role of the state. On the contrary, Soviet dialecticians indulged in an involved argument which pointed to the old conclusion that the state must remain strong even under communism.

Though Stalin was "rehabilitated" in 1957, his thesis on the intensification of the class struggle under socialism has not returned to favor. But neither is it treated

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[2] B. N. Ponomarev, *Politicheskii Slovar,* Second Edition, Moscow, 1958, p. 556. One concept mentioned perhaps requires a word. According to the "law of value" the commodity exchange is correlated with the amount of abstract, socially necessary labor used in the production of commodities. In Soviet usage the "law of value" refers euphemistically also to the market relationships permitted in the Soviet economy.

[3] Cf. M. E. Varga, "The Problems of the Postwar Industrial Cycles and the New Crisis of Overproduction," *Kommunist,* No. 8, June 1958.

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any more as one of his doctrinal sins. It has been quietly forgotten, as witnessed by the fact that it got no critical mention at all in the two most recent authoritative publications on theory, *The Political Dictionary* (1958) and the new party history (1959).

On the other hand, Stalin's theory of state is now accepted in principle and full credit is given to him:

Generalizing the historical experience accumulated by the party after the death of V. I. Lenin, a new contribution to the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the state was made by J. V. Stalin. In particular he showed the necessity of strengthening the Soviet state in every respect in conditions of capitalist encirclement, boldly posed the question of the insufficiency of the well-known formula of F. Engels about the withering away of the state, and gave a new formulation to the question of the possibility of preserving the state even under communism, if the danger of an attack from outside still exists.[4]

The sanctioned view of the state's role—at least for the present—seemed clear enough as expressed by Khrushchev himself, in an interview with a United Press correspondent in 1957: "It would be a serious error, a leftist deviation, if we were now to weaken our state organs of rule, to abolish the organs of coercion." [5] This line has been elaborated by the ideologists, *e.g.*:

The Communist Party takes constant care at the present time to strengthen the Soviet state and to make it more efficient in every respect. The theses "On the Fortieth Anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution" proclaim: "In present conditions Soviet society still needs a strong popular state for the defense of its socialist achievements and for taking charge of the building of communism." [6]

Changing State Functions

In rather startling contradiction to such statements, however, certain modifications have been made concerning the role of the state in the future. The theory inherited by today's ideological functionaries from the Stalin epoch divided the basic phases of societal development into two: first, the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, and second, the gradual transition to communism. In each of these phases the state has certain functions to fulfill. Among the functions listed in the first phase were: suppression of the overthrown exploiting classes, defense of the country, and performance of administrative-organizational and cultural-educational work by state organs. In the second phase the first of these functions is abolished, but the other two are retained and another is added: the task of safeguarding socialist property from thieves and embezzlers of the national wealth.[7]

While the basic stages of development have remained the same in present theory there has been a subtle twist in scholastic argumentation to emphasize the Khrushchevian shift from methods of direct coercion to those of persuasive pressure. The argument centers on a semantic nuance. Stalin was declared wrong in regarding "the administrative-organizational and cultural-educational work of the state organs as one function of the Soviet state." [8] His view was incorrect because, "as a result of joining these two functions, an impression is involuntarily created of the subordinate significance of cultural-educational work in relation to administrative-organizational activity." It is expedient to delimit the two because "the methods and forms of performing these two functions, [as well as] the organization and activity of the administrative organs of the economy and [those of] culture have their own peculiarities." [9] The Soviet intelligentsia supposedly can now rest assured that the peculiarities of the administrative function will not be applied in the intellectual sphere.

The functions of the Soviet state in the period of transition to communism remain the same as those enumerated in the Stalinist theory of state, but their content and relationship to the society are now presented differently. By a new dialectical turn Soviet scholastic experts have again tried to deal with that thorn in their flesh, the "withering away of the state." In a word, the abatement of terror and Khrushchev's administrative and judicial reforms have been heralded as steps in the direction of a diminution of state power:

The socialist state remains during the whole period of the construction of communism, but the content of its functions and the forms of its activity change. Gradually, the role of the administrative functions, connected with state coercion, is diminished. Thus the premises are being created for the withering away of the state which will take place at the higher stage of communism provided there is no danger of attack by the imperialist powers. At the higher stage of communism the importance of the planned direction of production and distribution . . . and [of] cultural values will

[4] M. V. Kharlamov, *The Activity of the CPSU for Further Strengthening of the Soviet Socialist State,* Moscow, 1958, p. 9.

[5] *Pravda,* November 19, 1957.

[6] *Kharlamov, op. cit.,* p. 11.

[7] M. P. Kareva *et al., Teoria Gosudarstva i Prava* (The Theory of State and Law), Moscow, 1955, pp. 210-40.

[8] V. V. Nikolaev, "On the Stages of Development of the Soviet Socialist State," *Voprosy Filosofii,* No. 4, 1957, p. 10.

[9] P. S. Romashkin, "The Development of the Functions of the Soviet state in the Process of Transition to Communism," in *Voprosy Stroitelstva Kommunizma v SSSR,* Soviet Academy of Science, Moscow, 1959, p. 113. This book and the new party history are the two basic texts on Soviet ideology under Khrushchev.

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increase even more. The state organs performing these functions under socialism will be replaced at the higher phase of communism by social organs of economic-cultural self-government.[10]

At the 21st Congress Khrushchev gave as an example of such "self-government" the action of the extra-judicial bodies set up under the so-called "anti-parasite" laws. The formation of the workers' militia (which existed previously as *Brigadmils*—Brigades for Cooperation with the Militia) is also hailed as "a step in the handing over of state functions to social organizations," [11] and therefore as part of the process of the withering away of the state. Various ossified institutions, including trade unions and the soviets (workers' councils), are now claimed to contribute to the same end.

A skeptical observer may have some difficulty in visualizing how much more "withered away" the Soviet state under communism will be in comparison to the capitalist states, with which it will presumably "coexist." The Soviet theoreticians have shown no such doubts, boldly proclaiming that "the 21st Congress of the CPSU has elaborated the problem of the concrete forms of the withering away of the state." They do confirm, however, that progress toward the goal will be a "protracted process." According to the theoretical organ of the party, *Kommunist:*

[The organs of state coercion] are still necessary in present conditions, but the social content of their activity has already changed essentially. At the 21st Congress it was noted that drastic coercion is at present directed against thieves, crooks, embezzlers of socialist property, parasites, malicious hooligans, murderers, and other criminal elements. Together with the creation of the conditions of the transition to communism, with the increase of the consciousness of the masses, coercion inside the country will diminish more and more . . . in the Soviet Union the sprouts of Communist social self-government have already appeared, and they represent the forms which will secure the further development of socialist democracy.[12]

One may wonder what "further development" these "sprouts" can accomplish—if, as is claimed in the new party history, socialist democracy already "secures to all Soviet citizens genuine freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, meetings and demonstrations. . . ." [13] But then, the dialectical process is unending.

IN ELABORATING his aforementioned theories of class struggle and state power during the building of socialism, Stalin argued "dialectically" that "any dialectical thinker understands that, in order to wither away, the state must first grow stronger" (speech before the 16th Party Congress). According to Khrushchev, the new phase of building communism has initiated the process of the withering away of the state. But he has made use of Stalin's argument for other purposes—and in the first instance, for the defense of the strong party.

Although at the higher stage of communism both the party and the state are destined to disappear, only the state seems to be involved in the process for the indefinite future:

To be sure, the party will not exist forever. Marxism-Leninism teaches that when the party has accomplished the construction of the higher stage of communism, which then ceases to be an object of struggle, only then will there be no more necessity for the party as a political organization.

[10] K. V. Ostrovityanov, "Some Problems of the Construction of Communism in the USSR and the Tasks of the Social Sciences," *ibid.*, p. 21.

[11] *Trud,* November 23, 1958.

[12] A. Davletkeldnev, "The Development by the 21st CPSU Congress of Teaching on the Socialist State," *Kommunist,* No. 11, July 1959, pp. 9-20.

[13] *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* Moscow, 1959, p. 662. For discussion of the theory of the state under Khrushchev, see also, *inter alia:* M. P. Kareva, "The Theoretical Significance of the Experience of the Soviet Socialist State," in *Voprosy Sovetskovo Gosudarstva i Prava,* Moscow, 1957; and D. A. Kerimov *et al,* "Marxist-Leninist Teaching on the Socialist State and Law," in *Sorok Let Sovetskovo Prava,* Leningrad, 1957.

Pies and Dialectics

Question (Hans J. Stinitz, *Der Bund,* Bern): The Chairman said at the National Press Club speech [Sept. 16, 1959] that capitalism, being more progressive than feudalism, replaced it and that communism, in time, will replace capitalism for the same reason. What will in turn follow communism?

Answer (Khrushchev): The process of transition in the change-over of social systems is going on. We, in our country, have only completed the first stage of Communist construction and the other Socialist countries have not even done that. They are in the process of completing the first stage of Socialist construction.

Now, without even having had a taste of the pie of communism, why should I seek a new pie to eat? I believe that the Communist pie is the best, we believe that the Communist pie is the best, we will like to eat it and will be ready to share it with all who like to share it.

—Extract from the news conference held by N. S. Khrushchev at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C., on Sept. 27, 1959 (New York Times, Sept. 28).

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This means that class differences will then finally disappear, as well as the essential differences between physical and mental labor, between town and country, and that the consciousness of all the toilers will be raised to the level of their Communist vanguard. But this is a question of the distant future. All the present practice of the construction of communism points to one necessity: the steadfast strengthening of the guiding role of the party in all spheres of life in Soviet society.[14]

In short, as with the state, in order to wither away the party must first grow stronger. Although Engels' third dialectical law, the negation of negation, which fell into disfavor in Stalin's time, is now readmitted, it is still the second dialectical law, the interpenetration of opposites, which reigns supreme.

Commodity Circulation

When Stalin proclaimed the achievement of socialism he justified it theoretically on the ground that with collectivization and the liquidation of NEP, the institution of private ownership of the means of production had ceased to exist in the USSR. Henceforth, there existed two sectors in the Soviet socialist economy: the state sector, consisting of nationalized industry and *sovkhozes* (state farms), and the cooperative sector, consisting of *kolkhozes* (collective farms) and *artels* (cooperatives). The transition to communism was said to involve "the raising of the private, cooperative sector to the level of the public, state sector"—in other words, total nationalization, not only of industry but also of agriculture.

Khrushchev's dissolution of the MTS (machine-tractor stations) and pronouncements on the "withering away of the state" have introduced new difficulties in doctrinal formulations and explanations touching upon the above concept.

Previously, the MTS were regarded as the nuclei of communism in the countryside. Stalin wrote in his *Economic Problems of Socialism* that selling the MTS to the collective farms would extend commodity circulation and would thereby hinder the transition to communism, which was incompatible with commodity circulation. But as this "retrograde step, turning back the wheel of history" (Stalin's words) has in fact been taken by his successor, Soviet theories have had to be revamped.

The theoretician Ostrovityanov produced the new rationale by applying the familiar dialectical argument, this time not to the withering away of the state or of the party, but to commodity circulation:

The dialectics of the development of socialist economy consists in the fact that we will reach the withering away of commodity production and money circulation at the highest phase of communism, as a result of the all-round development of commodity and money relationships at the socialist stage of development.[15]

The innovations on the withering away of the state create an even greater doctrinal quandary. How can the higher phase of communism be defined as a transition to the stage when the state takes over all productive property, if at the same time this transition is characterized by the gradual withering away of the state itself?

But as Stalin himself has said, "there are no fortresses which the Bolsheviks cannot conquer"—especially semantic fortresses besieged by theoreticians. P. Fedoseev, the head of the Institute of Philosophy—who ranks with Pospelov, Ponomarev and Ostrovityanov as a leading ideologist of the Khrushchev regime—provided a somewhat involved answer:

As long as the state exists, the public *(obshchenarodnaia)* form of property remains the nationalized means of production, *i.e.,* state property. When the state withers away the public means of production will cease to be state property. However, until then, the state socialist sector of production, based on public property, will play a leading role in the advancement of society to communism. There is no basic, qualitative difference between state socialist property and the future communist non-state form of property; the difference here is only in the degree of development at different stages of one and the same social-economic formation.[16]

Stalin might well admire this display of dialectical dexterity.

THE SOCIAL EFFECT of the transition to communism should be the classless society—the economic effect, the change to the distribution principle, "to each according to his needs."

Today as in Stalin's time, it is asserted that class distinctions in the USSR are being obliterated: but now the additional claim is made that the difference beween mental and physical labor has already begun to disappear. The reduction in the number of unskilled

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[14] G. Shitarev, "The Elevation of the Leading Role of the Party in the Building of Communism," *Kommunist,* No. 12, August 1958, pp. 12-13.

[15] Ostrovityanov, *op. cit.,* p. 25; cf. also D. Chesnokov, "The Development of the Forces and Relations of Production in the Period of the Intensified Construction of Communism," *Kommunist,* No. 10, July 1959.

[16] P. Fedoseev, "The Development of the Relations of Production in the Transition from Socialism to Communism," in *Voprosy Stroitelstva Kommunizma v SSSR,* Moscow, 1959, pp. 71-72.

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workers and Khrushchev's educational reform are mentioned in substantiation of this thesis.[17]

The distribution of products "according to needs," which in the orthodox theory was incompatible with commodity circulation and monetary exchange, now gets another doctrinal twist. At the 21st Congress Khrushchev declared that "an individual's needs are not unlimited," but cautiously added: "Of course, when we speak about satisfying the needs of the people we do not mean capricious demands and pretentions to luxury, but the healthy needs of a civilized man." [18]

Who decides what these "healthy needs" are is not made explicit. Presumably not the individual, but the state—in the time it has to spare from withering away. Nor are the criteria of distribution "according to needs" under communism made explicit, though Ostrovityanov has explained that they will not be too egalitarian:

The tendency to decrease differentiation in the remuneration of labor during the period of the transition to communism by no means signifies a tendency towards a leveling off in consumption. . . . The Communist principle of distribution does not signify equalitarianism and leveling of consumption, but a full satisfaction of the variegated and rising needs and tastes of the members of society.[19]

The Evolution of Khrushchevism

Any analysis attributing purely ideological motivation to Soviet political behavior is bound to result in confusion. So must the other extreme, that of reducing ideology to pure rationalization and denying its role altogether. Clearly in the first case, if true, there would be little doctrinal change; in the second, there would be no such pressing need as is evident for doctrinal justification, nor for the whole elaborate edifice of sophistry built whenever intractable reality forces "a creative development of Marxism."

Doctrinal adjustments reflect both internal Soviet social change and the international situation. That much goes without saying. But can one discern any long-term principles governing the relation between these factors? Such principles would help us to understand not only the role of "dialectical pragmatism" and doctrinal rationalization, but how they relate to each other: not only the evolution of the content of the ideology but perhaps also its changing function. For it is clear that doctrinal change under Khrushchev, as under Lenin and Stalin, is accompanied by a subtle change in the role of the ideology itself. The complexity of the evolution cannot be reduced to a single causative factor, but it can be related to a series of significant historical elements.

Each stage in the development of Marxism in Russia is obviously connected with the concomitant stage of economic development: transplantation occurred in the pre-industrial phase; adaptation took place in the period of early industrialization; and the present phase will be affected by the fact that the Soviet Union has become a mature economy.

Marxism in Russia, in its early phase, was a product of the revolutionary intelligentsia; under Stalin it was put in the hands of the semi-intelligentsia; and Khrushchev represents the *vydvizhentsy* who have arrived to take it in charge. Only in the next phase, when the new Soviet intelligentsia will acquire greater sophistication and the sons will again replace the fathers, is there a chance that it will lose some of its primitive flavor.

However, though economic and social change are bound to affect the content and role of ideology, constituting an ever-greater threat to the concept of party supremacy, it would be rash to infer that the party's position and political role will soon be automatically or basically changed. The party tries to forestall such effects by its technique of what might be termed "permanent revolution" from above. At the same time technocratic advance, as a result of the pressure for higher skills and greater specialization, is not without some advantages to the "theocrats": greater specialization makes it more, not less, difficult for the individual to relate his specialized knowledge to general developments. In the present set-up it is only the ideological "experts" who have the knowledge and position to deal with general political issues, and the party is the only institution providing the link between various bureaucracies in the society.

THE EVOLUTION of Khrushchevism has not, of course, depended on domestic developments alone, nor will it in the future. More attention is being paid to the international aspect of communism. According to the present doctrine socialism has become a world system. One of the new functions of the Soviet state is "the strengthening of the inviolable friendship, brotherly cooperation and mutual help of the countries of the world system of socialism." [20] The new party history, unlike the old *Short Course,* offers tribute to foreign Communist leaders. The opposition between the "socialist" and "capitalist" systems is stressed in Soviet publi-

[17] Cf. the present writer's article on "The New Soviet Intelligentsia," *Soviet Survey,* July-September 1959, pp. 103-11.

[18] *Izvestiia,* January 29, 1959.

[19] *Ostrovityanov, op. cit.,* pp. 35-36.

[20] *Romashkin, op. cit.,* p. 116.

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cations as much as ever, although the present emphasis is on proving the superiority of the Communist system through "peaceful competition."

The basic ambivalence of Russian Marxism remains. Communism in one bloc is an even greater anomaly in doctrinal terms than socialism in one country. The two "souls" of Bolshevism, the Marxist and the Jacobin, have as their historical roots orthodox universality on the one hand, the populist nationalist appeal on the other. These two aspects of Bolshevism have so far been reinforcing each other, thus increasing the danger of expansionism against the outside world. While there has always been a potential conflict between nationalist and universalist messianism in the motivation of Soviet policy, the contradiction is still not antinomical, although conceivably it might become so.

More important at present as a cause of ambivalence is the growing discrepancy between the maturing Soviet social structure and fundamentalist ideological prescriptions. The gap is steadily widening, and the legitimacy of the system is therefore under constant threat. Industrial development has introduced the necessity of rationalism in the organization of the economy, an element which the Soviet rulers can neglect only at their own peril and at the risk of undermining the international position of the USSR. The formal rationality of organization, the rationality of means, can of course coexist with the substantive irrationality of ideological ends. But the divorce between the two in Soviet society contributes further to the atrophy of faith. The *apparatchiki* have long ceased to believe that the average man will rise to the stature of Aristotle or Goethe, an idea expressed by Trotsky but shared by others in the romantic period of the revolution. The Soviet "organization man" is probably disinclined to believe that the "new Soviet man" will ever rise "above these heights to the new peaks," and must find it increasingly difficult to swallow the rest of the ideological nonsense with which he is bombarded—on the state withering away, on the disappearance of the differences between mental and manual occupations, on the imminence of distribution "according to needs," *etc.* Whereas Lenin suggested that the establishment of a Communist society might require a century or two, Khrushchev is promising it here and now, or in the not too distant future—thereby bringing nearer the day of reckoning, the confrontation of utopia with reality. Surely he must realize the utter incongruity of reducing the problem of achieving the Realm of Freedom to a question of *per capita* production of meat and milk.

The alternative possibilities of the evolution of Khrushchevism remain open. The tension between ideology and rationality is becoming more—not less—acute. As suggested earlier, one way out of this dilemma is a withering away not of the state, or the party, or commodity circulation, but of the Marxist faith itself. The other is a renewed cycle of ideological "restructuring of reality," either through new attempts to make Soviet reality conform to Marxist blueprints, or through the application of fundamentalism to the global community of non-believers, resulting in increased pressure on the "bourgeois world."

The history of Bolshevism offers many examples of such alternating cyclical phases. NEP was hailed as a return to normalcy, the end of revolutionary romanticism and the beginning of a new stability. Khrushchev's reforms, the easing of the position of the masses, the greater degree of security for the Soviet elite, and the higher role given to rationality in the productive process, do not do away with the basic cause of tension created by the issue of the legitimacy of the system. The flying pyramids, the sputniks and luniks, may perhaps divert attention from the chasm between theory and practice, but they hardly can bridge it. The present reformist phase of internal adjustment may well give way to another attempt to change this world, before conquering other worlds.

Those who hope that Khrushchevism will evolve harmlessly in and by itself, who ignore the expansionist element within it, do not understand the nature of the Communist system. Doctrines have a way of resisting social change, and doctrinaires change their views with utmost reluctance. Only when repeated attempts to violate reality are to no avail do they adjust themselves to it and proceed to produce another "creative contribution to Marxism." Resistance to Communist expansion is the best way to direct Soviet ideology towards internal euthanasia. Only in this way can the process of *embourgeoisement* come to fruition, and ideology and utopia be replaced by a domesticated ideological ritual and subtopia. When and if this happens, it will be legitimate for Soviet citizens to say along with Oscar Wilde: "The map of the world which does not contain an island of utopia is not even worth looking at."

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The Soviet Theater: Part I

By Juergen Ruehle

EDITORS' NOTE: Of all the spheres of Soviet culture, theatre is perhaps the art which illustrates most glaringly the chasm between the hopes and achievements of the early, revolutionary period of Soviet history and the cultural bankruptcy of succeeding eras. As in the case of the cinema (see Dwight MacDonald's "Soviet Cinema: A History and an Elegy," in the Nov.-Dec. 1954, and Jan.-Feb. 1955 issues of this journal), the precipitate descent of the Soviet theatre of the early 1920's to its present condition is rooted in the fundamental transformation which has occurred in the Soviet system. This fact emerges clearly in Mr. Ruehle's study, the first part of which deals with the early rise and decline of the Soviet theater; in the next issue the author will examine the current status of Soviet theatrical art.

HISTORIANS OF THE Soviet theater of the 1920's advance two opposing theses: One school says that the brilliant artistry of the theater in that early period of the Soviet Union was but an afterglow of the Silver Age that preceded the Revolution; that the Bolsheviks simply had not yet had time to liquidate the Russian theater. The other school holds that the Soviet theater of the 1920's was a product of the Bolshevik cultural revolution, a testimony to the fertility that revolutionary ideas bring to the arts.

The first thesis predominates among Western historians of the theater; it seems to have been formulated under the influence of the Russian émigrés, to whom the triumph of Bolshevism meant the destruction of the Russian way of life and, hence, of Russian art as well. It is interesting to note that a similar view, although with a different evaluation, was held by the Stalinists—*i.e.,* the adherents of Stalin's and Zhdanov's cultural policies—who likewise saw in the early, and to their minds formalistic and decadent, phase of Soviet art nothing but a vestige of reactionary bourgeois ideology and therefore liquidated it.

The second thesis was maintained by the Bolshevik leadership during the early, pre-Stalinist phase of the Soviet era. At that time, the Bolshevik Party laid claim to the achievements of Russian revolutionary art, which was attracting attention all over the world, as a triumph of its own ideas. After Stalin's death, this thesis was reinstated and the artists of the 1920's were rehabilitated. The partial revival of the revolutionary theater was one of the elements of destalinization (1953-1954), an aspect of the so-called Leninist renaissance.

Prerevolutionary Origins

The roots of the revolutionary theater reach deep into Russian and also West-European tradition. The leading figures of the theatrical world were mature and publicly acclaimed personalities who had developed their fundamental conceptions of art by the time the revolution broke out. To illustrate this point, let us consider the foremost revolutionaries of the theater: Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Tairov, and Vakhtangov.

Mr. Ruehle was a prominent theater-critic in Eastern Germany between 1949 and 1955. After breaking with the Socialist Unity [Communist] Party, he fled to the West, where he published a series of revelatory articles on Communist cultural policies in the Berlin journal Der Monat, *as well as a widely-hailed book on the Soviet theater*—Das Gefesselte Theater *(The Fettered Theater), Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Cologne, 1957. At present he is editor of the magazine* SBZ-Archiv *in Cologne.*

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When Stanislavsky stepped onto the stage of the Russian theater, the need for "naturalness" was the cry of the day. The commercial and industrial circles, who by then were setting the fashion in the arts, demanded the replacement of the decorative court theater by a "theater of truth." Konstantin Stanislavsky (real name, Alekseyev, 1863-1938) was himself the product of this newly self-assertive bourgeoisie. The son of a Moscow manufacturer, he dedicated his entire fortune to the theater as the years went by. The Moscow Art Theater was financed initially by the directors of the Philharmonic Society, an institution established by rich Moscow merchants, and later by the big industrialist Morozov alone.

Stanislavsky's early ideas, comprising the first, naturalistic, phase of his prerevolutionary work (beginning with the founding of the Moscow Art Theater in 1898),[1] must be understood against this social background. They were born of the optimistic belief in progress prevalent during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and of the materialistic philosophy of the then triumphant natural sciences. "I was born at the meeting point of two eras," Stanislavsky begins his autobiography. "Thus I witnessed the progress from the tallow candle to the spotlight, from the stagecoach to the airplane, from the sailboat to the submarine, from the mail courier to telegraphy, from the flint-lock musket to the 'Big Bertha,' from serfdom to Bolshevism."[2] As one of the generation which had accomplished all these marvels, Stanislavsky wondered why "a patriarch as venerable as our theater . . . should to this day remain in an almost primordial state."[3] He saw his life's mission in raising dramatic art to a state of perfection commensurate with the demands of the scientific age.

This indeed was a time when new ideas began to assert themselves in theaters throughout Europe—Germany and France in particular. Stanislavsky's program corresponded largely to the trends in French and German naturalism:

We protested against the former art of acting, against the histrionic routine, against the false pathos, against the declaiming, against the dramatic exaggeration, against the foolish conventions in staging and stage scenery, against the star system which destroys the teamwork—in effect against the whole manner of the performances, as well as against the worthless repertoire of the theater at that time.[4]

This is not to say, of course, that the Art Theater was merely an echo of theatrical movements in Western Europe. The Russian love of and gift for the theater, fed from deep inner springs, brought performances to a perfection approaching the miraculous.

Symbolism and the "System"

When it is said that Stanislavsky established naturalism in Russia, it must not be forgotten that he introduced symbolism and surrealism to the Russian stage as well. The production in 1907 of Hamsun's *The Play of Life* marks the opening of the second, symbolist, phase of his development.

The events of the year 1905 (Russia's defeat in the war with Japan, the first Russian revolution, and after its suppression a period of militant reaction) had ushered in the era of wars, revolutions and dictatorships for Russia, sweeping away the bourgeoisie's complacent belief in progress. In the European theater a new literary movement made its appearance, which naturalistic techniques could no longer cope with. The repertoire of the Art Theater was henceforth dominated not by Tolstoy, Chekhov and Gorky, but by Hamsun, Maeterlinck, Dostoyevsky, Andreyev, the Hauptmann of the middle period, and the later Ibsen.

Stanislavsky responded to the signs of the times with extraordinary consistency and courage. He enlisted the cooperation of avant-garde artists (Gordon Craig, Benoit), and on his own designed surrealistic and visionary stage settings. In collaboration with Tolstoy's disciple, Sulerzhitsky (who injected many elements of Tolstoyism into Stanislavsky's ethical views), and with Meyerhold, who had severed his ties with the Art Theater some years before because of his aversion to naturalism, Stanislavsky founded several experimental studios.

At this time Stanislavsky also came under the influence of Indian mysticism, then in vogue in Russia, with important effect on his methodology of acting. His new basic idea—the stimulation of intuition by physical exercise—was evidently borrowed from the teachings of the Indian yogis. The merging into one's environment, which Stanislavsky demanded of the actor, thus acquired a new, and ultimate, significance: acting, he now believed, is not an imitation of reality but a penetration into the sphere of the subconscious, which is possible

[1] On Stanislavsky's development see: K. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art,* Little, Brown, Boston, 1924; N. Albakin, *Das Stanislawski-System und das Sowjettheater* (The Stanislavsky System and the Soviet Theater) Henschelverlag, (East) Berlin, 1953; D. Magarshak, *Stanislavsky,* Magibbon & Kee, London, 1950.

[2] K. Stanislavsky, *Mein Leben in der Kunst,* Henschelverlag, (East) Berlin, 1951, p. 12.

[3] K. Stanislavsky, "Über das Theater" (On the Theater), *Neue Welt,* (East) Berlin, No. 10, 1953.

[4] K. Stanislavsky, *Mein Leben in der Kunst,* p. 317.

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only in an authentic environment, in a concrete situation. "If the body does not begin to live, the soul cannot believe either." [5]

To describe the Stanislavsky System[6] (as it eventually emerged), one can simply say that it rests on two conceptual pillars: "bodily freedom" and the "supreme task." The first principle of "bodily freedom" consists in urging the actor not to *feel* on the stage as though he were the character to be portrayed, but to *act* that way. The term "bodily freedom" is in fact not quite precise, for it refers to human action as a whole, including the psychic expression, the will, and the utterance of words, in addition to physical action as such. Stanislavsky formulated his guiding principles in order to stress simple realistic behavior, to show the contrast between his method and convulsive attempts to engender emotion out of the blue (which leads to "ham acting"), and to distinguish it from a routine mastering of certain standardized forms of human expression. The actor was to relive his role each time by going through its actions. For the mature (post-naturalistic) Stanislavsky, "bodily freedom" meant not only an imitation of nature but a means of bringing intuition and the subconscious into play.

The "supreme task" which is distilled from the movement and the spoken words of the play as well as from the roles, is the creative basic formula for the production. The purpose of postulating a "supreme task" is first to eliminate the rambling—and consequently ineffective—type of staging, and secondly to concentrate the attention of the director and the actors on the text proper, rather than on moods or what might be termed "stage tricks." The connection between the elements of "bodily freedom" and the "supreme task" is formed by the "trunkline of action." This concept links the individual actions together, eliminating those that are unsuited to the "supreme task," digressive, or superfluous.

The Stanislavsky System is neither an outmoded stylistic form, nor a stale species of 19th-century naturalism, as many critics say, nor a dramatic panacea, as its apologists maintain. The System is the point of departure, the basis of all dramatic art, just as the study of nature is the foundation of all painting. Most great actors—consciously or unconsciously—lean on the methodology which Stanislavsky for the first time formulated in scientific categories. Means of representation such as stylizing, the grotesque, exotic effects, lighting effects, etc., were used repeatedly by Stanislavsky himself. If he did not take them into account in his System, it is because his development was broken off by the October Revolution, when he fell into tragic isolation. Moreover, he himself always regarded his System as not yet completed.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

[6] On the Stanislavsky System, see, in addition to the works already named: K. Stanislavsky, *Das Geheimnis des Schauspielerischen Erfolges,* (The Secret of Acting Success), Scientia-Verlag, Zurich, and Gallus-Verlag, Vienna, 1940; T. Cole, *Acting,* A Handbook of the Stanislavsky Method, London and New York, 1955.

Other Innovators

Although Meyerhold, Tairov and Vakhtangov, too, passed through the *purely* naturalistic school, they developed their individual styles in sharp opposition to naturalism. In so doing they went beyond Stanislavsky, who never completely outgrew his naturalistic origins.

Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1939), who was the son of a provincial vodka manufacturer, was the best student at the Art Theater's school of acting.[7] He played the male lead in the memorable première of Chekhov's *Sea Gull.* Stanislavsky, highly demanding though he was, entrusted Meyerhold with tasks of stage directing notwithstanding his youthful years. After several years Meyerhold parted company with his teachers, Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, and went to St. Petersburg where the famous actress Komisarzhevskaya had opened an avant-garde theater. In opposition to the naturalism of the Art Theater, Meyerhold developed the principles of the "symbolical" stage. His goal was the decorative, pictorial composition of the stage; he grouped his actors like living bas-reliefs or frescoes. When Stanislavsky began to have doubts about his own work, he called back his most gifted pupil, but their joint studio failed for financial reasons. In the years before World War I, Meyerhold—although denounced as a revolutionary—conquered the Imperial theaters in St. Petersburg, reshaping them with his stunning stagings of drama and opera.

Alexander Tairov (whose real name was Kornfeld, 1885-1950), after becoming disillusioned with naturalism, accepted a call from Marzhanov, a rich theater enthusiast in Moscow, to direct the Free Theater, which aimed to promote all the various forms of the theatrical arts under the banner of "synthetic theater." [8] Given the

[7] On Meyerhold's development see: V. Meyerhold, *Rekonstruktsia teatra* (Reconstruction of the Theater), *Auslandstournee 1930,* Berlin, 1930; Y. Yelagin, *Tyomnyi Genii* (Dark Genius), Chekhov Publishing House, New York, 1955.

[8] On Tairov's development see: Mikhail A. Zelikson, *The Artist of the Kamerni Theater*—1914-1934, Moscow, 1935; A. Tairov, *Das entfesselte Theater* (The Unfettered Theater), Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, Potsdam, 1927; J. Gregor and R. Fülöp-Miller, *Das russische Theater* (The Theater in Russia), Amalthea-Verlag, Vienna, 1927.

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task of producing a pantomime, Tairov was thrust upon the path which he was thenceforth to follow faithfully, even after Marzhanov's undertaking ended in bankruptcy. In 1914, after the war had already broken out, Tairov opened his own experimental stage, the Moscow Chamber Theater.

Tairov defined the aims of his theater negatively, distinguishing it from Stanislavsky's naturalistic theater and from the symbolical theater of Meyerhold. To his mind both these schools did violence to the stage and most of all to its essence, the art of acting, which he conceived as the human body's art of expression. In Tairov's opinion, the naturalistic system turned the actor into a psychopath burrowing about in his own soul, while the symbolical stage debased him into a mere speck of color or an element of construction on the stage. Tairov strove for a theater of pure acting, liberated from all psychological, literary, pictorial or mechanical aspirations. It is in this sense that the slogan, "the unfettered theater," is to be understood. Derived from the title of Tairov's book, it has come to stand for Tairov's entire work in the field of drama. The actor should be allowed to unfold freely on the stage, unfettered by any influence alien to his art, bound alone by his physical structure. What Tairov aspired to, then, was *l'art pour l'art,* the art of acting for its own sake. In practice, this meant that his stage methods approached the modern expressionistic dance: his actors moved rhythmically, striding, tripping, skipping on a stage set with monumental cubes, squares, cones, sloping platforms and flights of steps.

YEVGENY VAKHTANGOV (1883-1922), like Meyerhold a product of the Moscow Art Theater and one of Stanislavsky's favorite pupils, awoke to artistic originality in the period of transition between the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.[9] This was the time when Gorky and Stanislavsky, both brimming over with new ideas, discussed plans for a "stage of improvisation." Under the impression of the impromptu folk plays he had seen in Naples, Gorky suggested a revival of the *commedia dell'arte.* He visualized it as follows: A playwright sketches a scenario indicating the plot, the cast, and the locale of a play. In the course of discussions and rehearsals with the actors, who create their own image of their roles, the "sketched model of characters" is rounded out with detailed, true-to-life traits. As the characters evolve, their inherent contradictions will also evolve, and thus the dramatic conflicts will be created. The dramatist writes the final script during the group's rehearsals. Stanislavsky, who was interested in Gorky's idea, set up a studio to try out the procedure in practice; he made Sulerzhitsky director of the studio and Vakhtangov his assistant.

Not much came of the experiments, however. For one thing, Gorky's concepts were at variance with the concepts of the Art Theater. Gorky was by temperament always immersed in revolutionary politics—despite his differences with Lenin—whereas Stanislavsky and Sulerzhitsky, in keeping with Tolstoy's teachings, put their faith in an artistic and humanitarian regeneration. Improvisation, to be sure, would have been a suitable tool for the mere propagandizing of ideas; it was not suited, however, for any penetrating articulation of ideas. Furthermore, the propagandizing of ideas—and here is the second reason for the failure of the experiments—was not yet in demand at that time. After the revolution, of course, the improvisation technique proved very fruitful.

In any case, under the influence of Gorky's experiments, Vakhtangov broke with the artistic policy of the Moscow Art Theater. After Sulerzhitsky's premature death in 1916, Vakhtangov took over the First Studio of the Art Theater, and soon stamped it with the imprint of his own personality.

It is clear, then, that the great Russian stage directors were well-matured in their ideas even before the Revolution. Yet it is just as evident that all of them—with the exception of Stanislavsky—derived from that upheaval creative impulses without which their rise to world fame would have been inconceivable.

The "October in the Theater"

In the early postrevolutionary years, the Soviet theater was dominated by the imposing mass spectacles held, in the manner of mystery plays, on the holidays of the so-called Red Calendar—the anniversary of the October Revolution, for example, or May Day—or in celebration of Bolshevik party congresses. Arranged by men such as Meyerhold, Yevreinov, Kershentsev, chiefly at Petrograd and Moscow, these presentations dealt with the historic events of the revolution and enlisted thousands, even tens of thousands of people as participants. This political use of the theater did not remain confined to the large cities. Sent out from the centers, agitation troupes traveled all over the country putting on dramatic performances. During the civil war, 3,000 theatrical organizations were counted in the Soviet Union, but this

[9] On Vakhtangov's development see: Y. Vakhtangov, *Zapiski, pisma, stati* (Notes, Letters, Essays), Iskusstvo Publishing House, Moscow, 1939; B. Byalik, *Gorki und das Theater* (Gorky and the Theater), Verlag Kultur und Fortschritt, (East) Berlin, 1954; J. Jelagin, *The Taming of the Arts,* Dutton, New York, 1951.

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figure does not even begin to reflect the importance of theatrical activity at that time. Almost every factory, every village party organization, every unit of the Red Army played theater in one way or another. In a country whose inhabitants were predominantly illiterate, the stage play—whether performed in a factory shop, in a shed, on the village green or elsewhere in the open air—was the most effective tool for agitation and propaganda. There were the "Red Reviews" by the "Blue Blouses" (or Agitprop Brigades). There was the "Living Newspaper," a sequel of scenes depicting and explaining the latest political events. There were the "agitcourts" which, with the participation of the audience, tried and condemned the White-Guardist generals, the members of the Triple Entente, the hoarders, as well as "illiteracy," "famine," and "typhoid epidemics."

It is only through this upsurge of folk-theater playing, with its mass spectacles, its amateur performances, its agitation and propaganda rallies, that the Soviet theater of the 1920's—the "October in the Theater"—can be really understood.[10] That which sprang up with such elemental force at the mass gatherings later found its way in a refined form to the theaters of Moscow, Petrograd (Leningrad) and Kiev. Many of the characteristics which made the early Soviet theater world famous can be traced to the conditions confronted in staging productions in the streets and in the country. There was, for one thing, the sovereign authority of the director—for he had been the man in charge at the mass spectacles and the agitation rallies, who, like the leader of an army, had to decide on the action and to direct huge numbers of participants. A corollary characteristic was the priority of staging and improvisation over the word of the playwright, which was considered a mere starting point, raw material for the real task, and in any case was drowned out in the general hubbub. Nor was there any use for psychology or individual creation of character by the actors; the need was for forms of expression which could be heard and seen over great distances and which could be mastered by the performers, most of them amateurs, without previous training—in other words, mass movements, choruses, heroic and satirical formulas and symbols. The borderline between performers and spectators became blurred; they were all participants in a political action. And the borderline between the various forms of art also vanished, since not only acting but also pantomime, recitation, dancing, music, painting, acrobatics and buffoonery came into play, depending upon the talent available in the group.

Above all, however, the theater of the masses and the theater of the young Soviet stage groups responded to one and the same decisive impulse: the political mandate. Just as the theater of antiquity sprang from religious worship, so the theater of the Soviet Union sprang from political life, from gatherings, meetings and demonstrations. Only those theater directors whose aspirations were in keeping with the spirit of the times were thus able to maintain their position.

A Burst of Freedom—and its Limits

The post of Chief of the Theater Section in the People's Commissariat of Education was given to Meyerhold. Meyerhold's joining the party was not an act of opportunism; throughout his life and up to his tragic death as a victim of the Great Purge, he was not a conformist but a man of honest convictions. As Russia's most consistent theatrical innovator, who again and again had run into barriers, material and intellectual, he discovered undreamed-of creative possibilities in the Revolution. Suddenly, the entire rigid structure of theatrical conventions and limitations had been swept away; the sovereign master of a powerful modern stage apparatus, obeying his own inspirations, he now found himself face to face with an unsophisticated public, which was grateful for every cultural experience it was offered. The theater of the postrevolutionary period offered him a free and vast field for his experiments; here he could introduce and try out in the course of a few years, all the innovations which were achieved by the avant-garde in other countries only after decades of struggle with vested theater interests and a conventionally minded public. To Meyerhold, the revolution became a mighty wave of liberation—small wonder, then, that he was also in full sympathy with the social emancipation of the workers and peasants, and linked his endeavors with theirs. He had no grasp of Bolshevik ideology; and in his theater, he never presented the specifically Bolshevik variant of the Revolution but only revolution *per se*—the revolt of the masses.

Under the impact of the social revolution, Meyerhold's principle of the symbolical stage underwent a change. Meyerhold based his work principally on three components of presentation: bio-mechanics, folkplay, buffoonery, and constructivism in the stage décor. The bio-mechanics method was designed to achieve the most

[10] The term "October in the Theater" was originally adopted by Meyerhold and his colleagues to identify the movement for a revolutionary theater; more broadly it connotes all of the theatrical trends of the period. See: J. Gregor and R. Fülöp-Miller, *Op. cit.;* A. Holitscher, *Das theater im revolutionären Russland* (The Theater in Revolutionary Russia), *Kunst und Volk,* Bühnenverlag, Berlin, 1924; P. Kershentsev, *Das schöpferische Theater* (The Creative Theater), Hoym Nachfolger, Hamburg, 1922.

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rational and laconic movements on the stage and the transformation of spiritual and mental experiences into physical expressions. By this means, the emotions were to be converted into formulas, the experiences of the individual were to be socialized and standardized in a way considered desirable by a theater aspiring to collective experiences and mass actions. The buffoonery of the farces at the country fairs was revived because it was far more intimately interwoven with Russian folk life than the theatrical arts proper, imported as they were from the West and addressing themselves mainly to the propertied classes. The court jester, who was at liberty to tell the truth even to the Tsar himself, was looked upon as something of a forerunner of the revolution. Constructivism, finally, which did away with the picture-frame stage with its curtains and wings, and instead installed on the stage movable ceilings, turntables, platforms which could be raised or lowered, lifts, escalators and cranes, was designed to "reshape the stage in the image of our technical world."

THERE WAS A DIFFERENT relationship between the pure estheticism of Tairov's Chamber Theater and the Bolshevik revolution. Not only was Tairov in his personal attitude and convictions anything but a Bolshevik; his artistic credo compelled him to reject any tendencies bent on using the theater as a forum for agitation and mobilization of the masses. In this respect, his view differed markedly from those of Meyerhold and his followers. Tairov envisioned the regeneration, not of the cultist, but of the esthetic theater, not a theatricalization of life as proclaimed by the director Yevreinov, but a "theatricalization of the theater." Nevertheless, it was certainly not an accident that Tairov's stagings contained elements of the revolutionary theater.

It must be remembered that Tairov, like Meyerhold, Yevreinov and most of the other proponents of the "October in the theater," was the product of that avant-gardist reform movement which had taken hold of the cultural life of Russia before World War I. This movement was a reaction to the failure of the revolution of 1905, or, one might say, its sublimation. After their political hopes had been destroyed, the intelligentsia turned their yearning for emancipation into esthetic channels. The decidedly non-political and anti-ideological character of the cultural reforms may be explained as an act of repression in the psychological sense. When, in the year 1917, the heavy weight of oppression was lifted from political life in Russia, the artistic revolution merged at once with the current of the political revolution. The expressionists, futurists and symbolists of literature and of the theater became the first protagonists of revolutionary art; their innovations, developed long before and independently of the revolution, proved fully adequate to the turbulent spirit of the times. Many artistic devices which Tairov had tried out on his experimental stage, such as the synthetic method of representation and the stereometrical stage settings, were adopted by the revolutionary theater without hesitation.

At the same time, the year 1917 meant a decisive change for Tairov personally. For one thing, his Chamber Theater—as also the Moscow Art Theater—was relieved of its perennial financial woes and enabled to operate on a far larger scale. This by itself might not have been of much help if the post-revolutionary period had not at the same time offered a fertile climate for Tairov's aspirations. The public, receptive to innovations of any kind, responded with enthusiasm to the most elaborate flights of fancy and hailed them as revolutionary feats, so that Tairov could give free rein to his imagination. His stage work was transplanted from its earlier esoteric exclusiveness into the mainstream of public life. This contact with reality had an invigorating and stimulating effect upon Tairov and freed his productions of their former, somewhat decadent and extravagant quality.

"Theatrical Theater"

It goes without saying that Vakhtangov, too, with his attachment to improvisation, immediately came under the spell of the revolution. He noted in his diary: "We must dramatize the rebellious spirit of the people. . . . It would be well if someone wrote a play without any individual roles. In all acts, the masses are the only players. . . ." [11] He had turned from Stanislavsky's extreme individual psychology to the equally extreme mass movement of Meyerhold. Eventually, however, when already marked by death, he found a personal style of his own. The great presentations which constitute his claim to lasting fame were produced in the agony of the last two years of his life, the years 1921 and 1922, which are among the most terrible in Russian history. In the midst of misery, horror and despair, tortured by cancer and feverish with pneumonia, Vakhtangov unfolded the radiant gaiety of his "theatrical theater." The overwhelming success of his achievement, which was not only enthusiastically received by the public but also approved by his famous colleagues—Stanislavsky, Nemirovich-Danchenko, Tairov, and Meyerhold—may clearly be attributed to the circumstance that at a crucial hour he

[11] N. Albakin, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

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embodied the hopes of the people in theatrical visions. This young director, who had welcomed the revolution without reservation, now felt that the time had come to put an end to it. In his artistic creations he anticipated the end of the terror, for which the whole nation was longing. The triumphal acclaim accorded his *Turandot* while he already lay on his deathbed, coincided with the advent of the NEP, which brought the Russian people a brief spell of political and economic freedom. Vakhtangov's presentations seemed a promise of the better life that was to come when the fruits of the revolution would be harvested.

In this final phase, Vakhtangov's methods of improvisation underwent a change. Improvisation was limited to the rehearsals, where each member of the cast had an opportunity to display his imagination, repartee, and wit. From the wealth of suggestions and ideas presented, the director then crystallized the definitive form of the production. No longer were there any improvisations during the actual performance; what mattered now was the sense of improvisation that had been achieved. In contrast to Gorky and Meyerhold, who believed that the essence of improvisation was creation of the play by the actors themselves—the actors being considered as representatives of the masses who, as the Communists put it, "take their fate into their own hands"—Vakhtangov's basic point in the use of improvisation was not the collective production of pronouncements on cultural policies but the free, relaxed and serene play symbolic of a free, relaxed and serene life. This difference expressed itself both in the selection of subject matter (literary instead of political) and in stage methods ("theatrical theater" instead of mass scenes.). Vakhtangov's aversion to all ideology anticipated a similar general trend in the Soviet theater in the years to come.

STANISLAVSKY REMAINED completely aloof from the October Revolution. The radical reorganization of society was a blow to his creative work from which he never recovered. At first he had attempted to satisfy the mood of the times by staging a symbolistic performance of Byron's mystery play *Cain;* but because of its religious trappings (in a period of violent campaigning against the church) it was misunderstood and failed. Stanislavsky vented his annoyance by including in the repertoire of his musical studio a work most decidedly out of tune with the spirit of the times—Lecocq's old operetta *La fille de Madame Angot,* lampooning the French Revolution. It required the intervention of several high-ranking party leaders, including Lenin and Lunacharsky, to save Russia's most famous theater from being liquidated. The Moscow Art Theater was preserved—as a precious museum piece, so to speak. In 1926 Stanislavsky produced Bulgakov's *Days of the Turbines,* which produced a tumultuous scandal because White Guardist officers appeared in it as tragic heroes and the Tsarist anthem was sung on the stage.[12] For the tenth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution in 1927, when the Art Theater could no longer avoid taking notice of the new era, Stanislavsky finally staged a Soviet revolutionary play, Ivanov's *Armored Train 14-69.* But even this production—today interpreted by Soviet historiography as Stanislavsky's declaration of allegiance to the revolution—was sternly denounced at the time by the critics because Stanislavsky's staging had stripped the play of all its poster-style political characteristics. After these repeated failures the aging Stanislavsky retired completely into the shell of his private studio.

Stanislavsky was clearly one of the Russian artists whose aspirations were in conflict with the revolution. We may well ask what prevented this indefatigable experimenter, twice the leader of a revolution in the Russian theater, from joining the "October in the Theater" movement. Quite clearly, it was his dislike for the political theater, which was incompatible with his conceptions of the humanitarian mission of art. "Tendentiousness and art are incompatible," he wrote in 1925. "The one precludes the other. If one approaches art merely with tendentious, propagandistic or other non-artistic aims, it will wilt like a flower in one's hand." [13]

The Stalinist Invasion of Art

Why did the revolutionary period of the Soviet theater, which had flowered so richly and colorfully, come to an end so soon? It is very enlightening to read today what an unbiased observer, the Austrian critic Fülöp-Miller, wrote in the late 1920's after a visit to the Soviet Union:

At a gala performance given during the last big anniversary celebration for numerous guests at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, the stage, decked out in red, was again, as so often before occupied by the Bengal-lighted, gigantic "Globe Delivered," an indispensable stage prop of the

[12] Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940), one of the best Soviet dramatists, star playwright of the exacting Moscow Theater, wrote to Stalin in the thirties, when all his plays were banned, that the government ought to let him emigrate or shoot him, because under the circumstances his life no longer had any meaning. Stalin then ordered that *The Days of the Turbines* be put in the repertoire again (slightly retouched) and its author be given a position as a dramatist with the Art Theater. He himself informed Bulgakov of the decision by telephone. (See J. Jelagin, *The Taming of the Arts.*)

[13] K. Stanislavsky, *Mein Leben in der Kunst,* p. 429.

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early, solemn period of Soviet art. The globe was surrounded by persons whose heavy chains of papier-mache were intended to symbolize the slavery under the former world order. A poet of the Leftist Literary Front declaimed revolutionary hymns; presently the stage began to glow with a red light, the slaves threw off their cardboard chains, the "globe" split open and disgorged from its belly masses of people who immediately intoned the stereotyped triumphant hymn of the revolution. But, how false this scene now seemed to the viewer! What once, in its naive symbolism, had been the artistic expression of a faith flushed with victory, now no longer corresponded to the real mood of the people. The lofty impulse which once created this form for the theater had long since been extinguished by the thousand worries and troubles of everyday life; thus nothing remained of the earlier elation but the hollow stage tricks.[14]

More clearly than any theoretical discussion, Fülöp-Miller's account explains why the revolutionary theater was doomed. It had outlived its time; the revolutionary illusion became a lie. Russia stood at the crossroads: she either had to revert to despotism or advance toward democracy. From the revolutionary theater the road led either back to a theatrical byzantinism or forward to a free theater in a free society. The early development toward a free, unprejudiced, truthful and human theater had been staked out by Vakhtangov before his untimely death, and reached its climax when Meyerhold, the initiator of the "October in the Theater," renounced his previous stage work and publicly proclaimed himself a disciple of Vakhtangov's.[15] This development was supported by liberal party leaders like Lunacharsky and Bukharin, who aimed at a democratization of Soviet society.[16] The party bureaucracy under Stalin, on the other hand, was bound to see a peril in the theater, both in its revolutionary and in its postrevolutionary attitudes.

In the early 1930's the number of plays and productions banned from the theaters began to increase sharply.[17] The censorship was no longer directed exclusively against non-Communist artists like Bulgakov, but also against the Communists who deviated from the general Stalinist line. The following are the two most important cases:

In 1929-30, Meyerhold (in cooperation with the composer Shostakovich and the artists' co-operative *Kukryniksy*) produced Mayakovsky's satires *The Bedbug* and *The Bath*. In these plays Mayakovsky had given free reign to his increasing hatred of the party bureaucracy. By means of grotesqueries, parodies, and utopias (the plays are laid in the second millennium) he censured the Bolshevik bigwigs and the "New Class" in the manner of Djilas. *The Bath* ends with the provocative statement that the functionaries are unnecessary for communism. The party critics were indignant; the satires were removed from the repertoire and remained banned until after Stalin's death. The hounding and defamation to which Mayakovsky had been subjected undoubtedly contributed to his suicide in 1930.

In 1936 Tairov's Chamber Theater staged the opera *The Knights,* by Borodin. It was produced with a new libretto in which its author, the Agitprop poet Demyan Bedny, poured forth scorn and ridicule on the old Russian knights and heroes. In doing so he had overlooked the fact that the party line had in the meantime changed from the revolutionary contempt of the entire Russian past to a new chauvinism. (Stalin, for example, permitted a new production of the opera *A Life for the Tsar* with only its title changed to *Ivan Sussanin.*) Molotov left the premiere of *The Knights* under protest. According to Yelagin, he is supposed to have said: "A dirty shame! The old knights were great men!" The opera was removed from the boards and Bedny expelled from the Writers' Union.

Purges and Gleichschaltung

Censorship now reached into questions of form; the reproach of "formalism" became a fearful anathema. All avant-garde and revolutionary elements and particularly the *Proletkult,*[18] were condemned for substituting "abstract sociological concepts for the concrete and typical artistic form."[19] The Stalin regime desired a theater as conventional and generally understandable as possible for the easy popularization of its propaganda themes; it was just as uninterested in an artistic mastery of the period as it was in a theater serving pure enjoyment. It wanted a political theater of illusion which would hide the bitter reality. It feared revolution in both content and form.

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[14] R. Fülöp-Miller, "Russisches Theater heute" (The Russian Theater Today), *Süddeutsche Monatshefte,* Munich, No. 4, 1929.

[15] V. Meyerhold, "Ob iskusstve teatra" (On the Art of the Theater), *Teatr,* Moscow, No. 3, 1957. (A posthumous selection of Meyerhold's speeches and conversations.)

[16] Cf. Lunacharsky's slogan "Back to Ostrovsky!" (The Russian 19th century writer and social critic) and Bukharin's speech at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934.

[17] The liquidation of the revolutionary theater is described in: J. Jelagin, *op. cit.;* M. Bradshaw, *Soviet Theaters 1917-1941,* Research Program on the USSR, New York, 1954: N. Gorchakov, *Istoria sovyetskovo teatra* (History of the Soviet Theater), Chekhov Publishing House, New York, 1956.

[18] Abbreviation of "proletarian culture." Leftist tendency in early Soviet cultural policy.

[19] N. Albakin, *op. cit.,* pp. 330 ff.

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A number of the best-known playhouses were closed, among them, the Moscow Korsch Theater, the Second Moscow Art Theater (a Stanislavsky establishment), Okhlopkov's Realistic Theater, the *Proletkult* Playhouse managed by Diki, all experimental and avant-garde studios, and, above all, the bulwark of the "October in the Theater," the Meyerhold Theater. The Stalinist terror struck mercilessly at the elite of the Soviet dramatic artists. One need only remember the liquidation of Vsevolod Meyerhold and his wife, the well-known actress Sinaida Reich, of the re-creator of the Ukrainian theater, Les Kurbas, the dramatists Isaak Babel, Vladimir Kirshon, Sergei Tretyakov and Mikola Kulish, as well as the entire top stratum of Soviet critics. The condemnations took place on political pretexts: Meyerhold, for example, was arrested after a speech against socialist realism, but at the trial he was accused of being a German spy. According to reliable reports from various sources, he succumbed to torture under interrogation.[20]

Postwar Debilitation

The survivors of the Great Purge of the 1930's, the *Yezhovshchina,* were subjected after World War II to a new wave of persecution—the *Zhdanovshchina.*[21] At the initiative of Andrei Zhdanov the Central Committee of the Communist Party took a number of decisions regarding literature (August 14, 1946), the theater (August 26, 1946), motion pictures (September 4, 1946), and music (February 10, 1948). Within the framework of these steps, disciplinary action was taken against the following, among others: the writers Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko; the theatrical directors Alexander Tairov and Nikolai Akimov, who were discharged from their position as heads of the Moscow Chamber Theater and of the Leningrad Comedy, respectively; the motion picture directors Pudovkin and Eisenstein (a Meyerhold pupil); and the composers Shoshtakovich, Prokofiev, and Khachaturian. The decree of August 26, 1946, "Concerning the Repertoire of the Playhouses and Measures for Its Improvement," criticized the Soviet theaters because they played Western dramas and the kind of Soviet plays that took a critical view of Soviet life and the Soviet people. The Central Committee made it compulsory for all theaters "each year to put on at least two or three new plays of high ideological and artistic quality dealing with modern Soviet themes." This order led to a flood of trash on the Soviet stage.

On January 28, 1948, an attack on the "antipatriotic group of dramatic critics" appeared in *Pravda.* Several leading Moscow critics, all without exception of Jewish extraction, were thereupon discharged and arrested. This action against the "cosmopolitan critics" and "agents of bourgeois decadence"[22] was the starting signal of Stalin's antisemitic campaign, in the course of which all Jewish theaters in the Soviet Union were closed, including the Yiddish Chamber Theater, which had played a part in the "October in the Theater." The famous actor Mikhoels, after whom the theater was named, died in 1948 under suspicious circumstances. Shortly after his death he was accused of cosmopolitanism and espionage for "Zionism."

By a strange irony, Stanislavsky's declining days were brightened by the glow of Stalin's favor. While Stanislavsky offered his private studio as a last asylum from persecution to his great disciple and antagonist, Meyerhold, the revolution of the theater was being crushed in his name—through no fault of his.

What was it, actually, that induced the regime to appropriate the Stanislavsky System? It was probably the circumstance that Stanislavsky's method, designed to teach the actor solid craftsmanship, seemed to make possible stage work without any creative artistic spark. By emphasizing certain rational and didactic elements in the system—its naturalistic dross, as it were—and suppressing the irrational and mystical elements of the symbolistic period, the System could be integrated to some extent with dialectical materialism; after all, both stemmed from the same root, the nineteenth century optimistic faith in progress. The fact that the System's usefulness was limited to the Russian classics and modern plays—a consequence of Stanislavsky's isolation after the October Revolution—was flattering to Great-Russian chauvinism; the conventionality and plausibility of the acting appealed to the philistine tastes of the functionaries. Still, in order that the System might be adopted without trouble, it was necessary to withhold, and in part suppress, the master's authentic writings. The version of the System declared to be authentic in 1950

[20] Regarding the death of Meyerhold, there are reports of an NKVD agent who was captured during World War II, (see W. Solsky "Der Grosse Meyerhold" (The Great Meyerhold), *Der Monat,* West Berlin, No. 21, 1950, and of Polish intellectuals who after the rehabilitation of Meyerhold were able to examine the interrogation files.

[21] Regarding the *Zhdanovshchina* see: A. Zhdanov. *Über Kunst und Wissenschaft* (On Art and Science), Dietz-Verlag, East Berlin, 1951; Central Committee of the CPSU (B), *Beschlüsse zu Fragen der Literatur und Kunst* (Decisions on Questions of Literature and Art), Dietz-Verlag, East Berlin, 1952.

[22] H. Rodenberg, *Das Grosse Vorbild* (The Great Model), Theater und Film, Haus der Kultur der Sowjetunion, East Berlin, 1952.

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and now practiced in the Soviet Union was worked out by a few Stalinist pupils of Stanislavsky's only after the death of the entire old guard of the Moscow Art Theater.

Summary

The Soviet revolutionary theater was not an original achievement of the Bolsheviks. The Silver Age preceding the revolution, with its abundance of talent and ideas, with its high artistic level and a social life permeated with love of the arts, was the indispensable basis for the flowering of the theater in the 1920's. It should be remembered that long before the triumph of the revolution Russian intellectual life had assumed a revolutionary character, in the field of politics as well as in the arts, and that it stood in opposition to the Tsarist regime.

It is also true, however, that the Russian theater of the 1920's was shaped by the spirit of the revolution—and specifically by Bolshevism, insofar as it was the most radical expression of revolutionary ideas. In the years of the revolutionary upheavals Bolshevism seemed to answer the basic demands and desires of the Russian people: measures such as the conclusion of a peace treaty, the distribution of land in 1917, industrialization, social reforms, expansion of public education, and cultural reforms, were welcomed by large sectors of the workers, peasants and the intelligentsia. Many artists who had held leftist or avant-gardist leanings under the Tsarist regime approved the abolition of academic conventions and found their creative impulses fired by the ethos of the revolution. When cultural institutions were taken over by the state, they also found material security and encouragement.

Yet the alliance between leftist art and leftist politics that was forged in the fire of the revolution never amounted to real identification. Even Communists like Meyerhold and Mayakovsky always had definite opinions of their own and clashed with the party again and again. On the other hand, the party leadership recognized from the very beginning the problems inherent in revolutionary art; it classified the artists only as "fellow travelers." Thus even the early years of the Soviet theater proved that complete accord between art and politics is impossible.

If the Soviet regime in its initial stages nevertheless tolerated and promoted art, it did so for two reasons: because the intellectual leaders of the revolution, like Lenin, Trotsky, Lunacharsky, Bukharin, Radek, were cultured and educated men for whom any forcible encroachment upon the creative processes of art was unthinkable; and because the party looked upon the cultural chaos as a natural transitional stage. Even though the 1925 resolution of the Central Committee, which determined the cultural policy for the succeeding years, did emphasize the class character of art and denied the possibility of a neutral and nonpolitical art, it acknowledged at the same time that the forms of art are "infinitely varied," that the proletariat, *i.e.* the party, had not as yet found the time to draw up a universally binding canon of esthetics, and that therefore the party could not identify itself with any artistic group, however pro-Communist that group might profess to be.[23] The initial tolerance of the Bolsheviks in matters of culture was thus an outgrowth of the utopian character of their policies in general. They were firmly convinced that sooner or later the classless Communist society would become a reality. Then there would be only one culture, Communist culture. All other artistic movements, deprived of their basis in society, would wither away and die. And one day, so they hoped, the revolutionary eruption of creative powers would bring forth the ideal art, true to the party line.

Early Soviet art, and hence the heyday of the Soviet theater, can then be characterized as an *art of revolutionary illusions,* from the point of view of the artists as well as from the point of view of the party. The break was inevitable when the Bolshevik ideals materialized into Stalinist reality.

[23] Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (B) "On the Policy of the Party in the Field of Belles-Lettres," June 18, 1925.

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Literature and the Peasant

By Tom Scriven

EDITORS' NOTE: Long a predominantly agricultural country, it is only natural that Soviet Russia should have given birth to many novels with a rural setting—books dealing with the years of famine and "war communism" (1918-19), the NEP, the tragic events of the collectivization period, and the current situation in the Soviet countryside. How Soviet writers have dealt with these subjects, what attitudes—both personal and official—toward the "muzhik" *they have thus betrayed, and what changes in this respect have occurred in the years since Stalin's death are the subjects discussed in the article below. The series on Soviet fiction as a reflection of Soviet reality will conclude with a study of how Soviet writers have dealt with the problem of nationalities in the USSR.*

WHATEVER OUR VIEW of the Bolshevik Revolution, one thing is certain—seldom have the mass of participants in such a decisive historical event so little understood the import of their actions.

The Russian intelligentsia for over a century had been debating whether the peasant was to become the subject of Russian history or to remain an object, the raw material to be worked up by other existing or emergent forces. Was he a natural communist, destined to outsoar the West in social development if protected from its debauching influence? Was he even perhaps, the humble vessel of devine grace for the renewal of a world relapsed into paganism? Or was he a barbarous anachronism, to be swept away by the onrush of industry and bourgeois civilization? Lenin's revolutionary strategy demanded that the peasant should briefly become the subject of Russian history, or at least the deuteragonist at its most critical turning-point, and should then be remolded by the proletariat in its own image.

The depth of the peasants' misunderstanding of this alloted role—leading to their later profound disillusionment—was evidenced in the distinction which they so often drew in the 1920's between "Bolsheviks" and "Communists." The Bolsheviks had given the land to those who worked it, decreed peace, set up local organs of peasant self-government. They were obviously not to be confused with those inexorable and incomprehensible fanatics who came down from the towns to raid the peasant's barn, conscript his sons, and seduce him into a new, weird form of propertiless servitude. The literature of the 1920's copiously testifies to the peasant's bewilderment, his ludicrous and pitiful insistence that the revolution meant what he had wanted it to mean. In Artem Vesyoly's *Native Land* (1924) the leader of a peasant uprising proclaims: "I hereby annul the Soviet power! . . . Death to Communists! Long live the Bolsheviks and all the common people!" And Boris Pilnyak, in *The Bare Year* (1922), makes one of his characters expound the *"muzhik"* (peasant) view of the revolution:

> **So I say at the meeting—there's no international, there's the Russian people's revolution, a bunt [peasant revolt] and nothing more. . . . What about Karl Marx, they ask. A German, I say, so he's a fool, must be. And Lenin? Lenin, I say, is from the *muzhiks,* a Bolshevik, but you must be a Communist. . . . Land for the peasants! Down with the landowners! Down with the skin-'em-alive Constituent Assembly! We want a Soviet for the whole land, so that everyone who wants to can come and decide under the sky. . . . Down with the Communists as well—the Bolsheviks, I say, can manage on their own.**[1]

Tom Scriven is the pen-name of a British student of Soviet literature. His last contribution, "The 'Literary Opposition'," appeared in the January-February 1958 issue of this journal.

[1] For a recent reference to this distinction see N. Virta in *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* March 21, 1959.

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This confusion of thought, or rather this typically Russian mythopeic self-delusion, has persisted. In the late 1940's for example, fantastic rumors reportedly spread through the countryside that at last the Communists, chastened by the experience of the war, were about to yield some of their usurped power to a peasant party, perhaps with Malenkov—Lenin's son, some said—at its head. And even now there are peasants, not all of them very old, who execrate the regime and venerate Lenin the land-giver.

Errors in Retrospect

That writers of the 1920's, even Bolsheviks like Vesyoly, candidly described the hostile and uncomprehending attitude of the country towards the towns was not always, as later Soviet critics claimed, a sign of ideological instability. More often it was because the writer shared the new rulers' contempt—sometimes fanatical and heartless, sometimes humorous and half-affectionate—for unlettered, drunken, starving and greedy, frightened and treacherously violent *muzhik* Russia. The ideology of the peasant, along with bast shoes and wooden ploughs, was part of the paraphernalia of backwardness. So one could write about him factually, and even with a touch of sentiment for his romantic wildness, such as one might feel for a picturesque bog which must none the less be drained.

Scholars of the period made the same "mistake," viewed retrospectively, as the imaginative writers. They "failed to overcome the Menshevik-S. R. [Socialist-Revolutionary] view of the peasant movement and the agrarian revolution," "considered the peasant movement in isolation from the actions of the workers," "exaggerated the spontaneity of the seizure of landlord estates," "inadequately displayed the political and organizational role of the party in winning over the peasant mass."[2] In short, they wrote objectively. At the same time, failing to anticipate the demands of socialist realism and the Stalin school of history, novelists and scholars neglected to show the middle and poor peasant masses as from the start natural and loyal allies in the building of socialism except when foreign agents, *kulaks* (the richer peasants) or enemies of the people hiding behind party cards misled them. Many of the best early Soviet writers on peasant themes fell into disfavor in the 1930's, and some of them paid the supreme penalty for their "historical misunderstanding." Vesyoly, and more precariously Pilnyak, seem to have regained a modest place in Soviet literary history, but it is uncertain which of their works will be republished.[3]

The difficult early years of the *kolkhoz* set an attractively baited trap for writers. Some of them felt a fresh access of revolutionary enthusiasm after the debilitating stagnation of NEP. For the first time since the civil war they had a truly dramatic theme: the martyrs and heroes of the Komsomol and the "twenty-five thousand" (the contingent of urban activists sent to help enforce collectivization); *kulak* terrorism and sabotage; the desperate struggle of Communist devotion and principle against peasant suspicion and instability. Then too, the horrific tale of rural backwardness had to be retold, to heighten the heroism of the civilizers and to offset the splendor of the new life they were building. But those writers who rose to the theme found that it bristled with vexatious problems. For one thing, if they painted a satisfyingly dark picture of the village and its inhabitants it was extremely difficult to make a rapid transformation plausible. And to make matters worse, it soon became obvious that the immediate result of collectivization was a deterioration in the material condition and morale of the peasants.

Literature of the 1930's

Two novels relating to the period are of lasting importance: Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (Part I, 1931) as a literary masterpiece, and Fedor Panferov's *Whetstones* (*Bruski,* Part I-IV, 1928-37) as a precious historical document.

Both books bear the stamp of sincerity. In Sholokhov's case, it is perhaps no more than a rapt exultation in violent action, intoxication with the "music of revolution," and at times merely the hypnotized single-mindedness of a master storyteller. Panferov is simpler: there is no mistaking the genuineness of his loathing for the milieu from which he had escaped, and his yearning to rescue his kin from age-old misery and barbarism. Yet it was Panferov who crashed through the obstacles which reality raised in the path of "*kolkhoz* literature," and Sholokhov who balked at them.

Sholokhov, by choosing the Cossack Don as his setting, might seem to have complicated his task. In fact, he turns the specific difficulties of his theme to good account. His Cossacks are not so ignorant and superstitious, not so abased and perverted by centuries of want and op-

[2] See review of P. N. Sobolev, "Bedneishee Krestianstvo" (The Poorest Peasants), *Voprosy Istorii,* March 1959.

[3] Another posthumously rehabilitated writer on peasant themes is Ivan Makarov, purged in 1936, died 1940. His interesting novel about colectivization in a flax-growing region, *Golubye Polia* (Blue Fields), was serialized in *Znamya,* Nos. 1-3, 1959.

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pression as the benighted Russian peasant. Their very spirit of independence—they boast that they did not stand too much nonsense from landowners in the old days—is a virtue they have in common with Sholokhov's idealized proletarian, and brings the two classes closer together. At the same time, Sholokov is able, not implausibly, to focus resistance to collectivization around the White Cossack officers Polovtsev and Lyatevsky, and their *kulak* stooges. His collectivizers have a hard and dangerous, but not, as Sholokhov represents it, a prohibitively difficult task.

Panferov was more ambitious. His village is a rural slum in the drought-stricken Middle Volga region, his peasants brutalized by an existence in which only ruthless selfishness can lift a man, and then not securely, out of reach of famine—people crippled and stupefied by their almost bare-handed struggle for life against poor soil and a baleful climate, unable even to sleep at sowing and harvest times when they must feed their draft-animals through the night, lapsing into fatalistic lethargy when crop failure threatens, their only relief in drunkenness and murderous brawls. The middle peasants and the least miserable among the poor peasants, dread collectivization, which they believe will level them all in destitution. Without a horse or an ox, and a few barnyard animals, a man has only a slippery hold on life. Panferov, unlike Sholokhov, shows the enormous psychological problems of collectivization in their true dimensions.

Story without an End

There is a further startling difference in the reactions of the two writers to the realization that collectivization had not brought about a quick improvement in the lot of the peasants. Sholokhov simply fell silent after completing his Part I, leaving the White conspirators undiscovered, the saboteur Ostrovnov still adviser on husbandry to the *kolkhoz* organizer Davydov (hero of the novel), and the Cossacks by no means fully converted to the new way of life. Readers have had to wait over a quarter of a century for the next instalment.[4] It would be presumptuous to claim any certain insight into the reasons for his silence, but there are clues.

A comparatively obscure literary journal,[5] in a very unusual article, recently informed us that Sholokhov had been deeply distressed by "absurd and monstrous" charges of Communists who, like his Davydov, had been "twenty-five thousanders" and founders of *kolkhozy*. He was, we read, so overwhelmed with anxiety that he had stopped writing; even with his writer's imagination he could not foresee the future of the rural community and the characters he had created. This evidence lends some credibility to the rumor, at first sight fantastic, that when Sholokhov finally returned to his story in recent years, he had to be dissuaded from making Davydov perish in the great purge—a disaster which would have disturbed Russian readers as powerfully as anything in the work of the revisionist writers.

The same article reminds us that in the years 1932-35 there was an acute grain shortage in the Cossack lands, which Sholokhov himself ascribed (in 1937) to Trotskyist sabotage. Is it not possible that in the middle 1930's he could see no way ahead for his politically vulnerable heroes—Davydov, the greenhorn whom a disguised *kulak* could mislead into strewing an ox-stall with sand instead of straw; and Nagulnov, the peasant fanatic painfully learning English in anticipation of the world revolution, and impatiently resorting to the readiest argument against local obstacles, the fist or the gun ("if every contra I clubbed gave up a hundred poods [of grain] I'd spend all my time at it.") Davydov and Nagulnov are ready-made deviationists—of the right and left respectively. And what of their inchoate *kolkhoz*—how would it weather the years of Trotskyist sabotage and non-fullfilment to come? Recently it has been said of Sholokhov that he can write only the truth; the remark was made at the 1955 Conference of Writers on Kolkhoz Themes (about which more later) by a speaker who, perhaps coincidentally, went on to mention the great purge as an example of hushed up "negative phenomena."[6] It certainly seems likely that Sholokhov could see no end to his story which would satisfy both his conscience and the political exigencies of the time.

Retreat from Reality

Panferov did not choose silence, but hurried ostentatiously after every swerve in the line. The result is a nightmarish discontinuity. The thousand pages of *Whetstones*, composed over ten fatal years, epitomize the degeneration of the Marxist idea and the failure of Soviet literature in its middle period. Panferov so admirably down-to-earth in his early chapters, takes flight—as

[4] The first "new chapters" appeared in *Pravda* in 1955. Part II was published in full in *Neva*, July 1959. It is a prolongation rather than a development of Part I, and although Sholokhov cannot write boringly, this latter-day work seems—perhaps not surprisingly—rather half-hearted.

[5] M. Soifer, "Sholokhov in Veshenskaia," in *Zvezda Vostoka* (Tashkent), No. 8, August 1959.

[6] N. Zatyan, quoted in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, November 1, 1955.

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the story grows more difficult and dangerous to the teller—into the dizzying air of paranoiac fantasy. The last outbreak of peasant resistance is provoked by a conspiratorial group uniting Trotskyists, Bukharinists, Zinovievites "and other oppositionists." They aim at the "physical destruction of Stalin" and the restoration of capitalism. To discredit the regime and raise the whole people in arms against it, their agents in "the agricultural organs, the People's Commisariat of Education, cooperative establishments and the Academy" introduce shallow ploughing ("citing American experience"), so that the following year's crop is weed-choked. They blacklist unstable villages, condemn them to starvation, and spread panic through the countryside by sending peasants near death from hunger on errands to other villages. Some villages they sweep clean of every last grain, rewarding them with honorific red banners, and their naive local Communists with rest-cures and scholarships, and leaving the peasants without bread. At the same time defaulting *kolkhozy,* those who were given banners of matting as a mark of disgrace, have enough to eat. In one village members of the conspiracy sprinkle millet in the ears of the horses, which run amuck, are declared mad by the veterinary (a conspirator) and are destroyed. And all this because the conspirators, who did all their deeds under the party flag, but "just a little bit to the left," never really shared the ideals of the proletariat, but wanted, when the landowners were driven out, "to occupy their mansions and live in them with the same rights."

Panferov's attempts to show the transformation of the peasant character as a result of cooperative effort in the *kolkhoz* are equally facile and feeble. In one astounding episode a peasant who just a few chapters back had sat on his last sack of grain, feeding himself and giving his starving daughter not a mouthful, demonstrates his reform by ceremoniously returning to the *kolkhoz* the four cart-loads of grain given to him as a prize.

Because they could not resolve their stories satisfactorily, what Sholokhov and Panferov leave most clearly imprinted on our minds is the picture of peasant fears, suspicions and resentment in the early days of collectivization. A Davydov may see the peasants as parasites: "They have lain down under the Soviet power like a lousy calf under a cow. They can suck all right, but they won't grow." But the peasant feels that he is the victim. Collectivization is like "giving your wife to uncle and going to a whore." The government is so exacting that you "pay for the smoke out of your chimney." The peasant is so attached to his horse—without it he is a "fly without wings"—that he stands about the *kolkhoz* stable watching it with anxious yearning, and even finds it a little extra feed. Perhaps, after all, the government will disband the *kolkhoz* when they find that it is a failure. Who is likely to take good care of what belongs to everyone—and no-one? What respectable, hardworking peasant is going to work for the benefit of loafers who have spent their lives on the stove, dreaming of a tasty piece? Even the "good lads" hang back, waiting to see how the *kolkhoz* will turn out, and "mostly digging their own gardens." There is hope —after all, the Communists had to disband the "hens' kolkhoz," because the "consciousness" of those birds had not yet "grown up to it."[7]

The usual absurd rumors fly around: the women will be made to sit on nests and hatch out eggs, and very likely they will be "driven into one yard" and held in common. There is violence—both Davydov and the Communist Ognev are terribly beaten, not by *kulaks* but by the peasant mob. And in *Whetstones* there is a vivid presentation of the prelude to the great famine of the early 1930's: the senseless, reckless, panic massacre of the animals, when "the whole *muzhik* kingdom gorged itself on meat." You can't go into paradise, says a cynic, with property.

The Heyday of Stalinist Literature

That "socialist realism" from the 1930's on paradoxically produced a literature that was both unrealistic and socially harmful is the unanswerable charge against it. Significantly, at the aforementioned Conference of Writers on Kolkhoz Themes, the eminent author Valentin Ovechkin mentioned the use of the term "critical realists" to distinguish the post-Stalin school from their discredited predecessors. After collectivization the party would not discuss frankly the true nature of its agricultural politicies or the extent of its difficulties in the countryside. Writers could only copy the complacent prevarications of officialdom. It is sometimes said that Stalin, sealed off from reality by the triple ring of dogma, sycophancy and sedentary routine, came at last to believe his own propaganda. Can he really have watched that favorite film of his, *Cossacks of the Kuban,* renamed *Eldorado* by some Soviet cinemagoers, with infatuated self-congratulation? However this may be, the unrealistic Stalinist literature on the countryside reached its apogee and the bankruptcy of Stalin's agricultural policy became frighteningly obvious at the same time—in the last five years of Stalin's life.

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[7] A reference to the unsuccessful attempt to socialize all livestock, undertaken by collectivizers "dizzy with success"; later poultry and other species were restored to peasant ownership.

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Correspondent Verkhogliadkin: The roosters are crowing, so obviously things aren't bad at the poultry farm. ("Verkhogliadko" is the Russian word for "superficial.")

—From Krokodil, September 30, 1956.

Subsequent critics of this literature concentrated their attacks on the most recent and readable culprits, Semyon Babaevsky and Galina Nikolaeva.[8] As always in Stalinist writing, the work of these authors is twisted and vitiated by their efforts to ignore or conceal all-important but unmentionable facts: that the *kolkhoz* was unprosperous and unpopular because the state took too much from it and paid too little; and that the Stalinist conception of the agricultural year as a campaign of two bureaucratic offensives (for sowing and for harvesting) against the peasant was obsolete and counter-productive. Writers could only spin fables about the magical results to be obtained from mechanization, organization and political education, and they were as glib and vague about the practical workings of these panaceas as Stalin himself. If Babaevsky's farm is backward he builds it a power station—never mind where the money comes from, even if last year's harvest was poor. If the farm needs new buildings he sends a large part of his labor force timbering in high summer, confident that the harvest will be gathered in somehow. In fact nothing can go wrong, because the hero is a demi-Stalin complete with magical powers, with his local "personality cult," with his own sickening pose of modesty and respect for the masses. There is no difficulty in mechanizing, says Babaevsky. "It's not hard to get a turbine—but how will you get your people on their feet?" "Cadres" and "consciousness"—that's the infallible recipe. Replace incompetent *raikom* (district committee) secretaries and dishonest *kolkhoz* chairmen—and don't forget to send reapers into the fields with their textbooks on Marxism-Leninism.

The results are, indeed, remarkable: "Only half a year had passed and how much had been done!" says Nikolaeva, with the air of the serial writer who delivers his hero from a hopelss predicament with a twist of the pen, à la Edgar Wallace's "One mighty bound and Standish was free." As for the trifling problem of peasant incomes—this, let us remember, at a time when *kolkhozy* paid miserably little, less than a ruble in cash and half a kilo of grain for a day's labor—if incomes are low it must be because the work-day has "not been teamed up with the machine" (Babaevsky), or because the *agronom* (agronomist) is not abreast of the latest methods of cultivation, or most likely because the peasants, discouraged by the mismanagement or peculation of their chairman, dodge work in the communal fields.

One of the most irritating features of such books is their abuse of hindsight. An innocent reader might think that Nikolaeva, in *Harvest,* was fertile in interesting practical suggestions: in fact she was only cataloguing measures which the party had already promulgated, disguising them as spontaneous deductions from her story and avoiding discussion of their application or efficacy.

Heroes and Villains

Worst of all, however, is the superficial treatment of human beings. Characters were merely conventional stereotypes for progressive or retrograde attitudes. Family relations became incidental to productive activity. ("Because they had started talking about great matters [the affairs of the *kolkhoz*] their family troubles [husband presumed dead, comes home to find wife living with another man] seemed to become less important."[9]) Lovers' meetings were the occasion for bickering about sowing times. Woe betide the lad who acted on an emotional impulse, and not at the dictates of civic conscience and business-like calculation! Not that there was much room for convincing practical discussion or ratiocination. Babaevsky was later criticized for finding "no forgiveness for such an offense as sober, business-like calculation in the management of the economy," viewing those who attempted it as potential "enemies of the people."[10]

[8] In particular, Babaevsky's *Kavalier Zolotoi Zvezdy* (The Knight of the Gold Star), 1947, (a Stalin Prize winner for 1948), and his *Svet nad Zemlei* (Light over the Land), 1949; and Nikolaeva's *Zhatva* (Harvest), 1950.

[9] Nikolaeva, *op. cit.*

[10] See F. Abramov, "Lyudi Kolkhoznoi Derevni v Poslevoyennoi Proze" (People of the Collective Village in Postwar Literature), *Novyi Mir,* April 1954.

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These were the limitations imposed on the main characters, usually drawn from a standard *dramatis personae: raikom* secretary, *kolkhoz* chairman, *agronom,* brigadiers, team leaders, *kolkhoz* specialists. Where were the ordinary peasants? They were a crudely sketched background—a ballet chorus of "paysans" drifting in groups behind the soloists, "positive" or "negative" as the case might be.[11]

This literature in effect reduced the problems of the countryside to a struggle between good and bad elements in rural cadres. It excluded from its view the desperate financial plight of the *kolkhoz,* the costly absurdities and injustices of agricultural planning and administration, the effects on the peasant of natural and certainly of political disasters. What could it say about the drought of 1946, or the currency reform of 1947, or the premature attempt to transfer the peasant's cow to the *kolkhoz* herd? Not until after 1953 did any Soviet writer dare to describe that "difficult time at the beginning of the 1950's" when a *kolkhoz* chairman could wake up to find another peasant family had fled in the night:

The *kolkhoz* was "burning." People, people, he thought, where is your consciousness? But he himself understood; how did consciousness come into it when the labor-day was *"gramm da grosh—zhivi kak khosh"* [a gram and a farthing —live as best you can.][12]

Pastoral Thaw

The great change in Soviet literature on the kolkhoz theme—and this is an important and difficult point for interpreters of Soviet domestic politics in that puzzling period—began in the last year of Stalin's life, with the first instalment of Valentin Ovechkin's *Raion Weekdays,* a work which contained refreshing if still cautious signs of a shift toward a new realism.[13] Landmarks on the new course were the subsequently condemned articles of Pomerantsev, "Sincerity in Literature" (1953) and Abramov, "People of the Collective Village in Postwar Prose (1954); the Conference of Writers on Kolkhoz Themes in December 1955; and Ovechkin's article based on his speech at that conference ("Collective Life and Literature").[14] Important representatives of the new trend, besides Ovechkin, are Tendryakov, Ivanov, Troyepolsky, Vinnichenko, Dorosh and Solukhin. Some of these writers are bolder and more radical than others. Some are primarily interested in human beings, others in technical matters. What unites them is their realistic approach to the question which their predecessors handled so gingerly: the relationship between officialdom and the peasant, the interaction between state policies and peasant attitudes.[15]

Their works trace many *kolkhoz* troubles to faults in the system itself, aggravated by the the inadequacies of those who administer it. Stereotyped, inflexible planning, without regard to local conditions or allowance for unforeseen circumstances, is a favorite target. A farm which could make a good profit from flax might have to grow grain, at production cost three times its selling price. Farms on the Komi border were made to grow corn, at the incredible expenditure of 25 work-days per stem. Essential pasture was ploughed up to fulfil the plan for developing virgin land, milch cows slaughtered to complete a meat delivery quota. Officials lived from campaign to campaign: seed might be sunk in mud—but the *raion* (district) must be able to report to the *oblast* (region), the *oblast* to the republic, and the republic to "the center" that sowing was completed by the appointed date.

Local officials believed "not our own eyes, not the peasant, but bits of paper." The plan which "the government has sent down" was sacrosanct, and those who criticized it "almost enemies of the people." If it were in principle permissible to modify the plan, the backward farms would take advantage and dodge their obligations. Officials were so intent on often illusory tactical gains that they lost sight of the strategic objective—bigger harvests. Thus, the peasants of a prosperous farm might be little better off than their laggard neighbors,

[11] See Abramov, *op. cit.,* and I. Vishnevskaia, quoted in *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* October 27, 1955.

[12] M. Zhestev, "Communism Comes to Alexandrovka," *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* March 5, 1959.

[13] V. Ovechkin, *Raionnye Budni,* 1952.

[14] V. Pomerantsev, "O Iskrennosti v Literature," *Novyi Mir,* June 1953; Abramov, *op. cit.;* Proceedings of the All-Union Conference of Writers on Kolkhoz Themes, *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* October 27-November 1, 1955; V. Ovechkin, "Kolkhoznaia Zhizn i Literatura," *Novyi Mir,* December 1955.

[15] Generalizations as well as specific examples and quotations in this part of the discussion are drawn from the following works: Abramov, *op. cit.* Proceedings of the Conference on Kolkhoz Themes, *loc. cit.* Ovechkin, both works previously cited and "Trudnaia Vesna" (Difficult Spring), *Novyi Mir,* March 1956. Vladimir Tendryakov, "Nenaste" (Dirty Weather), *ibid.,* February 1954; "Ne ko Dvora" (Not Suited), *ibid.,* June 1954; and *Sasha Otpravliaestsya* (Sasha Sets Out), serialized in *ibid.,* February and March 1956. G. Troyepolsky, "Zapiski Agronoma" (Notes of an Agronomist), "Odin Den" (One Day), "Sosedi" (Neighbors), and "Krutoi Yar" (Steep Bank), *ibid.,* respectively in March 1953, and January, April and September issues, 1954. Ivan Vinnichenko, "Na Vzlyote" (At the Take-off), *Oktyabr,* June 1958. Yefim Dorosh, "Derevenskie Zametki" (Village Notes), *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* No. 27, 1955; "Derevenski Dnevnik" (Village Dairy), *Literaturnaia Moskva,* 1956; and "Dva Dnia v Raigorode" (Two Days in the District Town), *Novyi Mir,* July 1958.

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because they would have to make extra deliveries above plan to cover any shortage in the district quota. At the same time relentless insistence on the recovery of arrears from the weak farms often drove the latter into bankruptcy. The machine-tractor stations (MTS)—"organizers of the socialist countryside"—also passed on their difficulties to the *kolkhoz*. At one time, for instance, they found it easier to fulfill harvesting and fuel economy plans if they sowed sparsely and kept down yields.

The multitudinous bureaucratic authorities concerned with agriculture were ill-coordinated, so that a *kolkhoz* might receive machinery, which it perhaps did not need, and be denied the materials to build sheds for them. Skilled personnel were distracted from practical work. The *agronom* could not get into the fields because he was too busy with absurd forms. ("Average number of bugs on each stem. How can I count them—they jump.") Often the critical period in the agricultural year was the occasion for a marathon round of meetings, at which all key personnel were immobilized for days on end, while they listened resignedly to ignorant windbags pointing out how important it was to hurry into the fields and belaboring such themes as "the pig is a useful animal."

Frank Portraits, Fair Criticisms

The new literature turns a clearer eye on the peasant as well as on the bureaucrat. "Survivals of the past" and "contradictions" are more vigorous in the country than in the towns. Everyone has always admitted it, in theory. But the Stalinist writers had been very coy about it. They did not know, for instance, what to say about the private plot—so they made the peasant speak scathingly of it, knowing surely that nobody would be fooled. The new school has rejected the ridiculous oversimplification that if the collective farmer is poor, it is because he does not work hard. Only higher incentives could attract the peasant from his plot to the communal sector and, equally important, check the drift of young people and able-bodied males to the towns. Peasant incomes and the capital-funds of farms have been reinforced by higher state prices for produce: they must be protected against the encroachment of bureaucratic bunglers and tyrants. Rural life must be made easier and more secure. A speaker at the 1955 Conference quoted a peasant as saying that his village sometimes received three or four "plenipotentiaries" a day—and never one who wanted to know what the peasant ate, where he slept, whether his roof leaked. And then there was the glaring fact that only wealthy farms operated social insurance schemes. Officials should stop treating the peasants either as fools

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—imagining that they cannot put a horse between the shafts without instructions—or as an alien, almost hostile class, after the fashion of Ovechkin's party secretary who says: "You carry on managing people with your peasant justice, I'll do it the proletarian way."

The "proletarian way" was the way of several of Tendryakov's negative characters: the *raikom* secretary who forces the peasants to waste their precious seed because he dares not risk a rebuke from above ("Dirty Weather"); Katya, the rural *komsomol* who goes straight from school into the party offices, identifies the party with its *apparat*, and cannot understand anyone working on the *kolkholz* from choice (*Sasha Sets Out*); above all, Mansurov, the *raikom* secretary whose over-ambitious miscalculations and inhumanity drive the *kolkhoz* chairman Murgin—one of the best-drawn peasant characters in Soviet literature—to suicide (also in *Sasha*).

But sensational dramas like the story of Murgin are rare. For the most part the new literature of the countryside is busy with more prosaic matters: painstaking discussion of *kolkhoz* problems, minute and sympathetic description of the way in which the peasant lives, and exploration of historically and geographically conditioned regional peculiarities. Yefim Dorosh, in his story of a North Russian area not very far from Moscow, perhaps Rostov Yaroslavsky, exhibits all three preoccupations, and gives an excellent account of the collectivized countryside. Dorosh writes well, but it is an extraordinary reflection on previous Soviet literature that his work should be as impressive as it is. It is exciting mainly because he describes things as they are, honestly admitting the conditions and problems which were always known to exist.

If our interest is in the size of the *kolkholz* labor force for example, Dorosh will tell us that "the village

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Now he lifts him to the sky . . .

has grown poor in people"; it is a long time since he saw a large peasant family of three generations filling their wooden home with noise and merriment. Most of the *kolkhoz* peasants are war-widows, or younger women who cannot find husbands but often have illegitimate children to keep. Their lives are hard: what with work in the fields and on their own plots, looking after homes and children, and taking produce to market, women are old at forty. Of course, it would be better if the communal sector guaranteed them a good wage, so that they need not bother about the private plot and the market. But, at the time of writing, the "private sector" was both the surest source of income for the peasant and the only reliable supplier of certain fruits and vegetables to the local towns. Moreover, "the *kolkhoz* as yet cannot compete with the high agricultural technique of the plot"; for Dorosh's peasants, unlike most of their brothers in Soviet literature, are allowed to demonstrate a remarkable heritage of agricultural lore, accumulated through ages of intelligent husbandry on once poor soil which they have made rich themselves. They would "waste" less time if local trade were better organized; if the rural cooperative did not feel that it could do well enough out of "vodka and short measure" without handling peasant produce; and if the peasants did not have to go into Moscow for such goods as roof iron, lamp chimneys, felt boots and soap, crowding trains on these excursions and creating "harmful irritation" against themselves.

What about time wasted on religious holidays—in practice the excuse for drinking and jollifications in the streets? The village, Dorosh shows, offers little in the way of entertainment or cultural activity, and the lives of many of its female inhabitants are laborious and lonely. Can they be blamed if, as soon as they can spare the money, which may be at the height of the harvest, they club together to buy drink and finish work early to have a party? And how do the youngsters spend their leisure? Well, there is always the street gathering, with singing and dancing to an accordion. There the girls will begin their "rather absurd" dance, the *yeletsky*. Two or four of them step into the middle of the ring and start slowly circling round, frantically stamping their feet, their arms limply dangling, their faces deliberately expressionless. Soon one of them yells out a *chastuska* (peasant ditty) with a significant refrain which could be translated, in doggerel not much worse than the original:

They miscall us and they bawl us
out, but still we jog along;
Whatever names they like to call us,
We're so tough we can't go wrong.

The town, of course, must raise the village up to its own level. But rather startlingly, the inhabitants of Dorosh's *raigorod,* (district town), except for the workers in its one factory, are provincial philistines and parasites not very different—he says himself—from their counterparts before the revolution. Other emissaries of urban civilization include an incompetent and time-wasting ministerial investigating commission, led by a "self-sacrificing blockhead"; and a blustering, shifty MTS director who stands on a platform as though it were a fortified position from which to bombard his audience. Dorosh praises his *raikom* secretary for learning to behave not like the usual urban bureaucrat come to reform the ignorant but rather like the old-style, country-bred farm chairman: "I think that we should have more confidence in the peasants—their common sense, their experience and last but not least their desire to have something to eat."

Limitations of the New Literature

To sum up, the recent work on rural themes deserves respect because it is informed with a refreshing commonsense and down-to-earth humanity unknown in the Stalin era and still rare in other reaches of Soviet litera-

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ture. But its importance should not be exaggerated, whether one is looking for evidence of a change of heart towards the peasant or signs of literary rejuvenation.

The new trend in *kolkhoz* literature has been the product of Khrushchev's break with the discredited agricultural policies of his predecessors, and of that practical, undogmatic approach to rural problems which, he has told us, once provoked Stalin into calling him a *"Narodnik."* Unlike the Babaevskys and Nikolaevas, Ovechkin and his fellows have not always trailed along behind party decisions: sometimes, indeed, they have anticipated official policy. It is nonetheless true that their work is for the most part an artistic elaboration of the critical observations and practical deductions which are embodied in the party's enactments on agriculture in the period 1953-58. Since the party itself has recognized and prescribed reforms against the abuses and absurdities with which the writers are largely concerned, most of their work is inevitably ephemeral. Obviously, they cannot discuss the results of Khrushchev's innovations as frankly as they have discussed those of his predecessor's mismanagement. Similarly, they will have to turn from examination of the peasant's grievances, which the party now regards as a thing of the past, and portray his progressive assimilation of the Communist ideal. In short, a new stabilization of agricultural policy may mean a new stagnation in *kolkhoz* literature.

The recent work considered here is essentially journalistic: its preferred forms are the essay, travel notes, the journal, the short story, the conte. This is partly because the writers were urgently concerned with matters of topical importance, but perhaps also because by avoiding large rounded forms they spared themselves the problems of balance between "positive" and "negative" which bedevil the Soviet novel. In any event, the sketchiness of the work makes it a very flimsy foundation for a new literature on rural themes. The spirit of Ovechkin, Tendryakov and Dorosh is admirable, but its embodiment is too insubstantial to preserve it.

Soviet literature on rural themes has passed through four phases. In the 1920's the writers, though often ideologically committed, were artistically free. With the beginning of mass collectivization they were forced into the struggle to reconcile realistic art with political expediency—a struggle which Sholokhov abandoned, but which Panferov pursued to the ruin of what might have been a great book. Art and truth alike disappeared from mature Stalinist literature. Finally, since Stalin's death, what we have seen is a new, humble and perhaps not very hardy flowering.

The lesson which should be evident—and many good Soviet writers are aware of it—is that a literature whose themes and aims are purely sociological can create work of high artistic and social value only if writers can freely range the historical and psychological depths of their subject matter. The Soviet writer has no such freedom. He is limited to his treatment of "what is" by taboos on the discussion of "what has been" and a rigid prescription of "what must be." Soviet literature can securely restore its credit for the future only if it pays its debts to the past, and many of the writers know this. Those who subscribed to the condemned "theory of distance" —the idea that literature can best make valid comments on reality in distant retrospect—were probably not all simply anxious, as official critics suggest, to avoid the difficult "actual themes" of the present. Some of them surely were motivated by the desire to reopen the awkward questions of yesterday, of the sort which the newly published party history so blandly evades. Not the least important of these questions is the fate dealt out to the Soviet peasant seen in historical perspective. The starting point for a new, artistically powerful and socially useful literature of the countryside could only be a novel such as Sholokhov or Panferov might have written but for Stalin.

. . . Now he throws him into the abyss.

—From Krokodil, May 10, 1957.

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The Soviet Union: Model for Asia?

EDITORS' NOTE: There is a widely held view that Soviet communism, by virtue of having transformed a backward country into the second most powerful industrial state in the world, has in effect created a unique "model" of social and industrial development which can and should be copied by all underdeveloped countries anxious to achieve rapid economic progress and prosperity. The "Soviet model," in this view, can be adopted without such totalitarian ingredients as forced collectivization, mass terror, and suppression of individual freedom and democracy; at the very least, the most essential elements of the Soviet experience can be profitably studied and adapted to specific Asian and African conditions.

How valid is this view? How truthful is the assumption that Russia in 1917 faced essentially the same problems as those faced by Asian and other underdeveloped countries today; that Soviet methods and techniques can be readily assimilated by other nations; and that this can be accomplished without the enormous cost in human misery which is the price millions of Russians have had to pay for their country's economic achievements?

These are the questions probed by the two articles below. In the first, Mr. Inkeles examines Soviet society—its structure, ethos, and values—in terms of its applicability (both in practical and in moral terms) to underdeveloped countries. In the second, Mr. Hoeffding deals specifically with the Soviet economic system and its usefulness as a guide to economic development in Asia. The articles constitute another installment in this journal's series on communism and underdeveloped areas. They are based on papers read at the 2nd International Conference of Sovietologists at Bad Aussee, Austria, September 1958; Mr. Hoeffding's paper also appeared in Osteuropa Wirtschaft, *No. 2, December 1958.*

The Social System

By Alex Inkeles

CUTTING BENEATH THE SURFACE of the many specific elements which make up the platforms and programs of the various national regimes of Asia, one may sum up the basic aspiration of their leaders as that of effecting a national renaissance or resurgence in countries whose independent existence is already of long standing, and a national upbuilding in countries which only recently have attained self-governing status. Stated more concretely, the objective of the Asian leaderships is to make their countries sufficiently strong so that they can enjoy a sense of genuine independence and autonomy, and can command both respect and influence in regional and world councils.

Although there have been exceptions in the past, such for example as the teachings of Ghandi, the Asian idea of how best to attain this condition seems today, almost universally, to postulate the necessity for a substantial development of heavy industry, supported by a large-scale, efficient system of transportation and communication. Everywhere, moreover, the corollary notion seems to prevail that these economic goals can be accomplished only by greatly strengthening the state and giving it the leading role in organizing, financing, and administering the program of economic transformation.

All this is generally summed up in the idea of

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"modernization." Although Asian leaders may differ in their views regarding the specific form and content of modernization, there can be little doubt that most of those who command any significant popular following in their countries are in basic agreement as to the objective, *i.e.,* the building up of national wealth and power. The urge to modernize should not necessarily be understood to mean disregard for local traditional cultures; on the contrary, some Asian leaders see no hope of preserving these cultures except through genuine national autonomy based upon economic adequacy and military power. Certainly, none wants to maintain the status quo in the sense of continuing the existing low standards of living, often involving bare subsistence levels in food, inadequate clothing and housing, widespread illiteracy, and lack of modern medical facilities. In the many areas where such conditions prevail, the impossibility of continuing to tolerate them leads more compellingly than anything else to acceptance, in principle, of a massive program of change. But precisely what the program should be is not always clear, and it is at this point that the Soviet model of social development becomes of special interest to Asians.

It is not only inescapable but proper and desirable that Asian leaders, in seeking to orient their own countries' course of future social development, should consider the Soviet model and weigh its applicability against that of others. Scholars of Soviet social evolution can make a useful contribution in this regard by helping the Asian leaders to arrive at a realistic assessment of what the Soviet pattern of development has actually been, what was its cost, what the main features of the system now are, and what seem to be its strengths and weaknesses. The present article takes this general approach, but since the author is not an expert in Asian affairs, he will largely eschew any attempt to state what direct, immediate relevance the Soviet model may have for Asia at large or for any particular Asian nation. The emphasis is on the pattern of Soviet development, and what follows is therefore relevant mainly to underdeveloped countries in Asia bent on full-scale modernization. Within this framework, the author will discuss four aspects of Soviet social development which he believes to have special relevance for those who are now or will in the future be guiding the development of these nations.

It is perhaps only natural that many should look to the theory of Marx and Lenin for an outline of Soviet society and a key to its development. For one thing, this is the path of least resistance since the Communist theoretical scriptures are readily available and more or less easily comprehended, whereas Soviet society as it actually exists has been largely inaccessible to direct observation by outsiders, and its institutional structure is not entirely self-evident. Another reason is that, because Marxist-Leninist theory is vitally important to them as a basis for legitimation of many Soviet developments, Soviet leaders assiduously cultivate the impression that every facet of social evolution in the USSR follows closely from the original theory.

Theory, Image, and Reality

In reality, however, the Soviet social structure bears only the most limited relation to the model originally presented or implied in the works of Marx, and only a slightly closer relation to its Leninist version. Any approach to Soviet society as a possible model for other countries therefore entails the particular obligation to distinguish between the plan for a socialist society as formulated in Marxist-Leninist theory, the image of it which Soviet propaganda disseminates and the real, dynamically functioning social system of the USSR.

This point is perhaps obvious, but it is nonetheless crucial. Those who look to the Soviet system as the embodiment of social justice and equality, and to the USSR as the home of the classless society and the withering away of the state, the land of mass participation in, and control of, government, the country which has emancipated women and eliminated what Engels called the "slavery" of the bourgeois family—such persons are looking for a model that exists only in the Marxist-Leninist classics. This is not to deny *actual* Soviet development any validity as a model, for it must be acknowledged that the Soviet Union is today an effective, complex, and distinctive large-scale industrial society. What must be clearly borne in mind, however, is that neither in the stages of its development nor in its present structure did Soviet society bear, or does it bear, any close resemblance to the blueprint of theory.

Throughout the discussion which follows, the author will consequently examine the Soviet model solely in terms of actual development and social reality. That this can safely be done incidentally highlights two important facts about Soviet development. The first is that it clearly is not compelling as a historical force: that is to say, it lacks that quality of scientific law which Soviet sources so often seek to impart to it. The second is that, like all social development, it has been much less a product of design and of man's conscious control than many would have us believe. Rather, it has been largely the product of improvisation, and much of it represents the unintended and unanticipated consequences of social action.

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In approaching Soviet development as a model, it is essential to give careful consideration to the time dimension—*i.e.,* to identify the different stages of this development and to distinguish clearly which particular stage is involved in the discussion. Failure to make this basic distinction has, in fact, been one of the most important sources of confusion in dealing with Soviet development. For the Soviet social system as it existed in the period of the New Economic Policy obviously was quite different from what it became in the subsequent period of forced industrialization and collectivization, and the latter in turn was markedly different from the mature system that emerged in the 1950's. The author views Soviet development to date as falling into five distinct stages which, though more or less chronological, are listed below and summarized in terms of the distinctive problem of each stage rather than of exact time periods.[1]

Stages of Soviet Development

The *first stage* revolves around the problem of the seizure of power, which is the pre-condition for the reshaping of the old order. Although, it is of great historical interest, this stage is not pertinent to the particular subject of this article. It may be noted in passing, however, that until very recently the orthodox Communist view seemed to be that the Soviet model of development could be instituted only after a *revolutionary and violent* seizure of power which destroyed the old political order. Now, this principle no longer appears to be strictly adhered to in theory or in practice, and some hope seems to be placed in the possibility of achieving Communist power through elections or other parliamentary means.

No matter how it comes about, the attainment of power creates the necessity of moving on to the *second stage,* in which the central problem is breaking the hold of traditional values—the first pre-condition, according to Soviet theory, for the establishment of new patterns of social organization. This stage begins with a phase of legal emancipation in which the most objectionable, unjust, or restrictive features of the old order are repealed. The task of reform is relatively easily accomplished and may receive wide popular support. In the Soviet Union this was the period of early legislation giving legal equality to women and national minorities and stipulating equal voting rights and status for all. Such measures were most vigorously pressed in the Revolutionary and War Communism periods, but continued on down through the years of the New Economic Policy.

The ensuing *third stage* is distinguished by an attempt to strike more deeply at religious, social, and cultural groups and patterns which are regarded as most characteristic of the old social order. In the Soviet case, the war against the family and the church, and later the break-up of the pattern of life of the village community, were part of this stage of development. In contrast to the changes introduced in the second stage, those of stage three may meet deep resistance from the population, which begins to find its basic values attacked and its primary institutions undermined. During this stage also, the revolutionary process starts to shift from concern with eliminating the old order to shaping the new, and at this point the instruments of change, which will be examined in a later section of this article, come most clearly into prominence.

The *fourth stage* is mainly concerned with mobilizing resources and people for rapid material development. Such mobilization is the central problem of this development, especially in its early phases. It begins by aggravating some of the problems of the third stage, and then generates many new problems. Forced movements of people, pressures compelling changes in the citizen's mode of livelihood, strict measures of rationing and control, perhaps a sudden reduction in an already low standard of living, inefficiency, waste, and even chaos may often accompany this stage. It is the stage in which the contrast between promise and fulfilment, between hope and reality, becomes most painfully acute. It is also the stage in which the costs of the Soviet path of development, more fully elaborated later, become most evident.

If and when a breakthrough has been made, and the "take-off" from backwardness toward modernity accomplished, new processes of social change are set in motion which in turn transform many institutions and patterns. This is the essence of the *fifth stage* of Soviet development—the stage of maturity. It is particularly in this stage that the whole complex of institutions and values which originated in West European industrial society is likely to re-emerge in the new "socialist" setting, often driving out the preceding values and institutions in the operation of a kind of "social Gresham's law." The growth of cities and the diffusion of urban culture, the weakening of primary kinship ties and the substitution of impersonal patterns of relationship, the shift to mass consumption patterns in all realms, includ-

[1] These stages are analyzed in some detail in the author's essay entitled "Social Change in Soviet Russia," published in *Freedom and Responsibility in Modern Society,* M. Berger and others, Eds., D. VanNostrand, New York, 1954.

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ing the dissemination of "canned" culture, are all part of this process. Some of its implications which are perhaps of particular relevance for Asia will be touched upon in the later discussion of the consequences of the Soviet model of development.

The Vital Question for Asia

The Soviet model, then, embraces the five stages of development described above. This immediately raises what may well be the crucial question for Asian leaders interested in this model for possible application to their own countries: namely, how compelling is the requirement that *all* these stages be followed? In the past, Soviet theory treated them as if they were all part of a social law admitting of no variation. More recently, Moscow has found it strategically advantageous to allow that the acquisition of power need not invariably be effected by armed revolution, but apart from this no important concessions have been made with regard to the main stages of development.

Soviet insistence on these stages is, of course, motivated by rather obvious concerns which need not be binding upon people elsewhere. It would, however, be a serious error to assume that any country's leadership could simply borrow elements at will from different stages of Soviet development, and rejoin them as it pleased in unique or distinctive combinations more suited to local conditions. This becomes quite clear if one considers the relationship between the earlier (second and third) stages of Soviet development and those which followed. Indeed, this development can also be viewed as consisting of two major phases which, in important degree, were quite distinct and markedly discontinuous. The first embraced the Revolution and the New Economic Policy, and was in many ways typical of numerous socialist revolutions which sought to bring an end to capitalism and autocracy, but which otherwise left the main outlines of the old social structure—especially the village, the family, the church, and the arts—relatively intact and free. The second major phase began with the inauguration of rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of the farms. It was only in this latter phase that the major totalitarian features of Soviet society fully emerged, their emergence being in part a pre-condition of the rapid economic changes, in part a defensive response to the popular resistance encountered by those changes.

Because of the sharp dividing line between the two major phases, Soviet development can be said to present not so much a single model as two different ones. The initial phase down to 1927, however, is certainly not distinctive to the Soviet Union, whereas the second phase from 1928 on—the so-called "second Soviet Revolution"—definitely *is*. Moreover, since the full industrialization of the USSR developed largely out of the policies of the second phase, it is the latter model which is likely to be the more compelling in its attraction for Asian leaders, even though the model offered by the earlier phase of Soviet development might appear to have much greater real relevance for the majority of Asian countries.

The essential point here is that, while there is no necessary and fixed evolutionary link between the two major phases of Soviet development just outlined, such a link does appear to exist between the developments *within each phase*. In particular, as noted above with regard to the second phase, there is a very evident fixed connection between the commitment to extremely rapid, forced industrialization and collectivization on the one hand, and the totalitarian features of Soviet development and society on the other. This is the basis for a central thesis of the present article, more fully discussed below: namely, that rapid industrialization on the Soviet model cannot be undertaken without incurring extremely great risk of developing a totalitarian sociopolitical system and experiencing, in the process, a severe disruption of valued traditional institutions.

The Instruments of Change

No model derived from Soviet development can be considered even remotely adequate unless it gives a central place to the unique agencies which were vitally necessary to the effectuation of the program of social transformation in Russia. Indeed, it is these instruments of change which hold the key to the whole process of Soviet development.

The evolution of the Soviet system was, of course, far from being a spontaneous process in the same sense as the industrial revolution in England. On the contrary, the essence of the Bolshevik impact on Russia lay in the fact that it made a sharp break in the established pattern of development and sought to impose a new and distinctive course. Lenin was always suspicious and sometimes scornful of the "spontaneity" of the masses, and he frequently castigated the working class for its "trade-union consciousness." For spontaneity he wished to substitute organization, planning, and discipline; for the trade-unionists' concern with securing better working conditions and general labor welfare he wanted to substitute a program of revolutionary political and radical economic change. Stalin was therefore acting in the spirit of Lenin when, a decade later, he launched the dual pro-

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gram of rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture, from the fires of which emerged the forms of Soviet society as we know them today.

Whatever the development of Soviet society may owe to the will, energy, talent, and creativity of the Russian people, it can hardly be maintained that the people conceived the program of change or that they supported the methods of its attainment. Had they been asked, many—perhaps most—Soviet citizens would no doubt have approved the idea that the Soviet Union should become a great industrial power. But it surely was not part of any understanding between the people and the regime that this should be accomplished at the cost of a drastic reduction in the standard of living to last for a decade; that it should require the destruction of the old village pattern of life, as well as of vast amounts of property and human lives; and that it should lead to the total mobilization of the population and the sacrifice of all liberties, freedoms, and rights, above all the right to personal security. In other words, the Bolshevik regime operated almost entirely without that broad basis of consensus which characterizes both traditional and modern democratic societies. Where the objective is merely to hold power and preserve a fixed social order, the absence of such consensus does not require too great an elaboration of social agencies other than the formal organs of government, augmented by a large police force. But to carry out so pervasive, radical, and ambitious a program of social change as was attempted in the Soviet Union, it was imperative to substitute the extensive development of agencies of enforcement for the broad consensus which was lacking.

Party, Police, and Propaganda

The foremost agency of change, the fulcrum of the entire program, was of course the Leninist Communist Party. As Lenin pointed out, the broader the movement as a whole, the smaller and harder must be its central, directing core. To lead a great population through an elaborate program of social change which it but dimly understood—and often vigorously resented—required a party organized along the lines of an officer corps. The party had to be, not the spokesman and instrument of popular sentiment nor the spontaneous agent of history, but a tightly knit, closely organized, disciplined, and unyielding organization for directing the masses in the campaigns of revolutionary social change. And since the Red Army was an army, not of volunteers, but of impressed soldiers drawn from the people, a vast and specialized police branch had to be organized to coerce the laggard, punish the recalcitrant, silence potential trouble-makers, and strike fear into the hearts of the great mass of the rank and file. Above all, the party members, charged by Lenin with the task of "pushing" the masses forward into history, had to be men specially steeled to force their will upon the common people.

Thus, history produced one of its strangely ironic twists, in which the "proletarian" party, the "party of the masses," became outstanding precisely because it recruited its members on the basis of allegiance to goals different from those of the popular masses, and picked them from among personality types divergent from, and even hostile to, the dominant types among the common folk. The party then proceeded to isolate its officials still further from the masses in order to preserve their unity as a quasi-military force and to prevent the "seepage" of popular values and sentiments into their awareness.

BUT THE SOVIET leaders saw that even a powerful, obedient, and carefully insulated party apparatus, though supported in addition by the full force of state terror, was not enough to effect the transformation of Soviet society. These instruments would suffice to run a static prison society, but not to develop a dynamically changing socio-economic revolution. The leaders certainly had no objection to popular support; on the contrary, they desired it greatly. The rigid organization of the party and maintenance of the secret police terror were necessary because, and so long as, there was no widespread popular support of the regime's program, but at the same time the leaders took every measure to secure such support, to induce, if possible, a genuine popular consensus or, if and when necessary, to manufacture a spurious and artificial appearance of one. To these ends they fostered the development of an enormous system of propaganda and agitation, and of a parallel system of censorship and control over all forms of expression and thought, including science and the arts.

The function of the system of propaganda and agitation was simple and straightforward: to disseminate the values of the regime, to urge acceptance of its goals, to justify the means adopted for their achievement, and to generate support for the whole venture. The manner in which these purposes were pursued sometimes involved the vulgarization of Marxism, often necessitated official falsification and dissimulation, and cost the citizen his privacy and even his peace of mind. The *crucial* fact about the system of propaganda and agitation, however, was that it could not hope to succeed unless it was based upon absolute monopoly control over thought and communication, including those modes of thinking and expression which are identified with science and art.

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The reasons for this are numerous, but the first and foremost was practical political necessity. To permit free expression of opinion would have made it obvious that the majority of the people did not support the new program, and the whole objective of creating at least an impression of popular consensus would have been defeated. In addition, free communication and discussion would not only make known the full extent of the sacrifices being imposed—information by no means available to all—but permit challenges to the official interpretations of events. The circulation of such facts and contrary interpretations would invite consideration of alternatives, thereby creating doubts and weakening the singleness of purpose which the Soviet leaders felt was essential to the large-scale effort demanded by their program.

Furthermore, the impact of free communication on the new generation, on which the regime counted particularly heavily, would be pernicious. The development of an orthodox, ideologically secure generation required that an invidious comparison be drawn between the new order and the old, and that this be handled largely by the official agencies of indoctrination, particularly the schools. The values which the older generation stood for, and the methods they sanctioned for attaining them, were often in direct conflict with the approved goals and methods of the regime. This ultimately required also that the parents in the home and the religious instructor in places of worship be silenced, or at least sharply proscribed in their freedom to challenge official policy.

Consequences of the Soviet Model

The simple extension of these principles dictated that other powerful influences on thought, especially science and art, must likewise be brought under control. Obviously, science and art are always underlain by some philosophy: they reflect a world view and have implications for man's action. Thus, all the same considerations which predisposed the regime to control private and mass communication also led to the control of literature, music, the plastic arts, philosophy, and science. These, too, had to be converted into "tools" and "instruments", into "driving belts" between the party and the masses. In the case of science, of course, there were also the practical implications of scientific effort, which gave added impetus to demands for an officially-prescribed school of genetics, psychology, and even physics.

Thus, in considering the Soviet model of development, it is impossible to separate its accomplishments from the instruments and methods which were required to bring them about. But there are other somewhat broader consequences which also demand attention.

There is one aspect of "modernization", irrespective of the exact model, from which many in the underdeveloped countries undoubtedly draw back. While importing the machine and that part of the machine culture necessary to its maintenance and operation, they hope to preserve the most important features of their traditional culture, including religious, ethical, familial and kinship, artistic, and political relations. The central dilemma facing many Asian leaders lies in the prospect that, in achieving modernization, they may lose what they and many of their countrymen cherish even more—their traditional cultural heritage. In becoming economically autonomous, their countries may yet become cultural "colonies" infused with the world culture of Western industrial society. It is indeed doubtful that modernization can be effected without incurring the disintegration of many elements of the traditional culture pattern. It must be recognized, however, that the Soviet model of change, because it demands high speed and great intensity, promises to entail a virtually absolute destruction of traditional values and institutions that would be extremely harsh in its impact.

The Soviet model of development, for example, places primary emphasis on heavy industry. Its chief criteria of evaluation are efficiency and productivity, and its philosophy defines the non-economic realms of life as mere "superstructure" mirroring the underlying relations of production. While its attitude toward traditional cultural values purports to be a neutrally objective, disinterested, historical-evolutionary perspective, it in fact glorifies the culture of the machine age. It places rational and material above esthetic and spiritual values; worships the future rather than venerating the past; looks upon tradition as an obstacle to progress; defines the village as the essence of backwardness; and regards traditional wisdom, and especially religion, at best as childlike remnants of man's primitive, pre-scientific past, at worst as deadly enemies of the new order.

In this model also—at least in its early stages of development—the family is treated much like the church. That is, it is seen as a focus of allegiance and loyalty in conflict or competition with the state. In the later stages, it is tolerated as an agent of the state, in caring for the child and instilling in him the officially-prescribed values and outlook. The independent, extended family household based on private holdings and family work units, which is the foundation stone of the village and ultimately of the whole social structure of most of Asia, is of course anathema to the Soviet way of thinking. The Soviet model requires its replacement by large-

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scale, impersonal production units, factories in the open, in which work is preferably for wages and rewards are allocated not to family units but to individual workers according to skill and effort. The Soviet pattern does not favor individuality, but it certainly fosters individuation at the expense of the communal, extended kinship, and familistic orientation. Social and physical mobility is required and actively encouraged. The growth of cities is stressed, and urban culture is favored over that rooted in the traditional, religiously sanctioned, communally based, and family-centered patterns of rural life.

Inherent Compulsions

Conflicts of loyalty present a particularly acute problem of Soviet-type development because of the combination of rigid insistence upon political orthodoxy and the added strains imposed by rapid development. A major factor in the hostility of the Soviet regime toward the traditional family and organized religion was its fear of divided allegiance and awareness of the fact that these institutions could shelter deviants and thereby make people relatively more independent of central authority than they would be without such shelter. Similar considerations inevitably lead to a struggle to eliminate or subvert all autonomous associations and organizations, as exemplified by the fact that in the Soviet Union national professional associations of doctors, lawyers, professors and others (at least as they are known in the West) are simply not permitted to exist. Such associations as must be kept, *e.g.,* the trade unions, are largely emasculated and subverted to the purposes of the state.

All these features stemming from the basic philosophy of Soviet communism—unchecked by the tendencies of constitutional politics and intensified by the extreme rapidity of change which became an essential characteristic of the Soviet model—had an explosive impact on the traditional way of life of the Russians themselves. By the same token, in other countries which may turn to the Soviet model, their consequences in terms of the destruction of cherished local institutions and values are bound to be more pronounced precisely to the extent that the people of the country live, even more than the Russians at the start of Soviet development, in traditional, village-based, non-industrial ways. In the Soviet case, it was the fixed desire and intention of the leaders to eradicate the old social order completely; they conceived of themselves as builders of an entirely new system and defined almost everything in Tsarist society as outmoded at best, and at worst despicable. On the contrary, many Asian leaders treasure the unique values and institutions which make up their cultural heritage, and seek to preserve them while yet gaining the benefits of rapid industrialization. They will, therefore, question whether adoption of the Soviet pattern of development need necessarily have the same consequences for their countries as it did in the Soviet case.

Of course, the mere fact that an Asian regime decides to attempt rapid economic development via the Soviet formula does not oblige its leaders consciously to adopt, from the start, the same hostile attitude toward traditional institutions that animated the founders of the Soviet state. But it does not follow that, because they shrink from such an attitude, they can necessarily escape the destructive consequences of the Soviet approach. For this destructiveness did not result solely or mainly from the Soviet leaders' original animus against traditional society. Rather, it grew out of their insistence upon rapid industrialization as the only path to socio-economic modernization, and the unrelenting pursuit of this goal despite the fact that the measures it required were not supported by any broad popular consensus, but on the contrary were widely resisted. High-speed industrialization demands the surrender of personal freedom for the sake of increased discipline and easier mobilization of men and resources; it demands the abandonment of traditional ways of doing things in order to facilitate planning and to free labor and capital. Moreover, the unwillingness to wait until a popular consensus of support can be created through persuasion, or to change goals, modify plans, and alter arrangements in response to popular desires—an unwillingness which is at the heart of the Soviet approach—leads inevitably to the use of force in order to attain the development objectives of the state. It is this inherent tendency toward forcible compulsion which makes the Soviet model of development so destructive of traditional values and ways of life.

The Choice For Asia

To sum up, the Soviet Union is—above all—a totalitarian society. Although a totalitarianism of the Left, it shares certain outstanding features with totalitarianism of the Right, such as was known in Germany under Hitler. These include the following characteristics, as defined by the Harvard political scientist, Professor Carl J. Friedrich:

> **(1) An official ideology . . ., covering all vital aspects of man's existence [focused in terms of chiliastic claims as to the "perfect" final society of mankind] to which everyone is supposed to adhere at least passively;**
>
> **(2) A single mass party consisting of a relatively small**

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percentage of the total population . . . organized in strictly hierarchical, oligarchical manner, usually under a single leader and typically either superior to or completely commingled with the bureaucratic governmental organization;

(3) A technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of control (in the same hands) of all effective means of mass communication;

(4) A system of terroristic police control . . ., characteristically directed not only against demonstrable "enemies" of the regime, but *against* arbitrarily selected classes of the population.[2]

To these should perhaps be added a fifth characteristic principle: that of monolithic social organization, which requires tight integration of all social institutions in support of the larger social plan, subordination of the individual and his associations to the purposes of the state, and the focusing of personal loyalty and allegiance in the party and its elite rather than in personal relations at the local level.[3]

Such are the essential features of Soviet society. If Asian leaders are looking for a system designed to permit total mobilization of the population for economic objectives; if they seek means of extracting surpluses for capital accumulation from a peasant population already living at an absolute minimum subsistence standard, or sometimes even below it; if they must have agencies and methods for breaking the resistance of traditional ways to desired changes—then, certainly, the Soviet model can show them the way. It is, however, a grim road to travel. It requires a special vehicle—an absolute political dictatorship armed with the weapons of terror and thought control, and a rigidly controlled and regimented social structure. The toll that must be paid includes the denial of individual freedom, the debasement of the living standard of the masses, the sacrifice of millions of lives, and the destruction of traditional religious, sociocultural, and ethical institutions and values.

In fact, there is reason to believe that most Asian leaders do not desire to establish totalitarian societies, and in most instances it would be difficult for them to posit the necessity for imposing forced-draft industrialization on Soviet lines. Nevertheless, it is of very great relevance for Asia that Soviet totalitarianism itself was, in large measure, not a product of premeditated planning, but rather a consequence of Stalin's decision to impose rapid industrialization by whatever means were necessary and regardless of the costs—material, social, and human.

[2] In *Totalitarianism,* Carl J. Friedrich, Ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1954, pp. 52-3.

[3] For a fuller discussion of this point, see the author's contribution, "The Totalitarian Mystique: Some Impressions of the Dynamics of Totalitarian Society," in the symposium just cited.

Some Western scholars claim that the newly emergent Asian countries, even without any initial desire to emulate the Soviet model, will experience a pull toward totalitarianism.[4] Indeed, it is argued that the attractiveness of the Soviet model for Asians will arise from this totalitarian drift, rather than that the model will first be adopted for other reasons and then produce totalitarian tendencies. According to this thesis, authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies are inherent in certain characteristics of the younger intelligentsia in many Asian countries. These are said to include a pervasive rejection of the past, an élitist attitude toward the masses, strong faith in the efficacy of social engineering, and preoccupation with the goal of rapid industrialization. The last of these alleged characteristics has been dealt with in this paper, and it has been argued that an absolute commitment to the goal of rapid industrialization was distinctive to the Soviet case. If it is indeed true that this goal is an unalterable principle of development for Asian leaders also, then the direst predictions concerning Asia's evolution would appear to have foundation.

The Importance of Perspective

The author strongly suspects, however, that other more indigenous conceptions of the good society are to be found in Asia. It is doubtful, furthermore, that the young intelligentsia everywhere in Asia share the outlook described above. On the contrary, it is safe to assume that many of them recognize the value of their heritage and wish to preserve the best of it; that they know humility and respect the intelligence of the people; that they approach with hesitation any effort to alter the intricate web of relations which characterize the established social order; and that they are concerned with preserving and attaining spiritual and social values other than those embodied in the development of heavy industry. Of course, only those more familiar with Asia can speak with authority on these important issues. But to the degree that there exist in Asia strong currents moving in this alternative direction, models of development other than that offered by the Soviet Union become highly relevant.

In conclusion, an evaluation of Soviet development as a model requires not merely that its distinctive features, its probable costs and consequences, be considered. It requires also that one stand off sufficiently far from the model to recognize that it is not a set of

[4] This thesis is most cogently argued by Zbigniew Brzezinski in "The Politics of World Development," *World Politics,* Vol. IX, No. 1 (October 1956), pp. 55-75.

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abstract principles or a kind of universal, scientifically derived blueprint such as Soviet spokesmen often picture it. On the contrary, it is but one historical instance of national development, shaped by a set of circumstances —historical, geographic, and political—distinctive to Russia and occurring at a particular point in time.

Whether these conditions are really matched anywhere in Asia, and whether the Soviet pattern of development may therefore be considered applicable to any particular part of it, remain open questions to be settled only by careful examination of individual cases. But even where the Soviet model may be regarded as really relevant, it would be unwise to forget that it is but one among many alternative models available. The leaders and people of each Asian nation must, of course, decide for themselves which model best suits their conditions and needs. But their decision ought to be taken with full awareness of what any model, be it the Soviet or any other, represents in terms of social and human costs, and with an understanding of what the ultimate consequences of certain early commitments are likely to be. The ultimate choice, therefore, is a moral and political one, and not one that can be determined by scientific methods, not excepting "the science of Marxism-Leninism."

State Planning and Forced Industrialization

By Oleg Hoeffding

THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE is to inquire into the relevance of Soviet experience with centralized economic planning and forced industrialization to the specific problems faced by underdeveloped countries in Asia.

The area covered in the article excludes the Middle East as well as Soviet Central Asia; the generalizations which will be advanced, therefore, will refer to South and Southeast Asia, Communist and non-Communist alike. (This is not to say, of course, that some of the observations made will not apply to other countries on the Asian continent—or for that matter, to underdeveloped countries in other parts of the world.) Japan, although no longer in the "underdeveloped" category will figure in the discussion if only because her experience shows that for an underdeveloped Asian country there *are* alternatives to the Soviet path of industrialization, and because her current structural problems serve as a reminder that industrialization alone does not solve all the trouble of an economy developing in an Asian demographic setting.

Soviet "state planning" is a term capable of at least two definitions, a broad and a narrow one. In its narrow sense, the term stands for the technical paraphernalia of Soviet planning: the Gosplan, the mechanism of the Five-Year Plans, the economic controls used by the Soviet government in the implementation of its economic goals, *etc.*

In a broader sense—and as the term will be used here —"Soviet state planning" stands for a complex of political and economic institutions specifically evolved by the Soviet leadership for the purpose of pushing the Russian economy along the path of rapid industrialization. It was not, after all, either the *Gosplan* or the Five-Year Plans as such that provided the keys to success in the Soviet drive for industrialization. Rather, the plans and the planners functioned as effectively as they did because they were supported by (a) the system of property and production relationships established by the revolution, which gave the Soviet state almost exclusive control over economic activity and empowered it to enforce its goals on the whole population; and (b) a mechanism of executive controls, used forcefully and ruthlessly to move all resources in the "right" direction.

The "Soviet System"

Viewed in this light, "Soviet state planning" is virtually synonymous with the "Soviet system." Indeed, it would be fruitless to study the specific technical features of Soviet economic planning in isolation from its en-

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vironment—that is, the "system"—for it is the latter that has lent the economic tools and techniques whatever effectiveness they have demonstrated. And what is true for the study of these techniques is even truer insofar as their piecemeal application in different social and political settings is concerned. Many an underdeveloped country, in Asia and elsewhere, has had a sad experience with shadowy Planning Boards and papery Five-Year Plans, all of which proved to be totally ineffective because they were backed neither by Soviet-type enforcement mechanisms, nor by any other workable alternatives.

The difficulty of separating the machinery of Soviet planning from the Soviet system as a whole—and particularly from the totalitarian features of the system—is directly related to the dilemma faced by non-Communist countries anxious to initiate or to accelerate economic development by extracting "lessons" from the Soviet "model." In reality, they either have to adopt the whole Soviet formula, with all its totalitarian ingredients, as China has done, or they have to seek different paths of development, as India is doing.

A word needs to be said here also about "forced industrialization." This term singles out that element of Soviet development in which the USSR was most conspicuously successful and which, understandably, attracts the greatest attention in Asia: the achievement, in forty years of Soviet rule and thirty years of comprehensive central planning, of a volume of industrial production second only to that of the United States, and exceeding that of any of the old industrial nations in Europe.

It should be clearly understood that industrialization is simply a special case of economic development, and that the Soviet Union committed itself not merely to a version of development which emphasized rapid industrialization above everything else, but to an economic policy specifically aimed at creating and operating a militarily powerful state. We owe a good description of Soviet development goals to a competent observer—certainly not suspect of rabid anti-communism—the Polish economist, Oscar Lange:

The Soviet economy was planned not for the harmony of its different branches, but for one single purpose, namely the most rapid industrialization and preparation of effective national defense. . . . Soviet economic planning did not serve the objectives of a harmonious socialist welfare economy, but served political and military objectives to which all other aspects of economic planning were sacrificed.[1]

[1] Oscar Lange, "The Working Principles of the Soviet Economy," in *USSR Economy and the War*, Russian Economic Institute, New York 1943, p. 43.

It is the central argument of this article that Asian countries cannot afford to commit themselves, as the USSR did, to a selective stress on rapid industrial growth with special emphasis on capital-heavy industries, and to neglect the growth of other branches of their economies—agriculture in particular.

The Prerevolutionary Russian Economy

The opinion has often been voiced that the state of the Russian economy before the revolution bears considerable resemblance to that of many Asian countries today—a comparison that is responsible for the great interest and attention paid in Asia to Soviet economic history.

Proponents of this view point out that Imperial Russia was an extremely backward and abjectly poor country. More than four-fifths of its population lived in the villages. Industry was in its infancy, and 75 percent of the working force was engaged in agriculture, even more than in present-day India. Farming methods were primitive and agricultural resources meager, and the Russian peasantry lived at a bare subsistence level. Nearly three-quarters of the population was illiterate. The birth rate, at 47 per thousand in 1913, was as high as anywhere in contemporary Asia, and although mortality was shockingly high too, population was growing at more than 1.5 percent per annum.

If one contrasts the present Soviet economy with these unpropitious beginnings, it is easy to conclude that the USSR must indeed have possessed a uniquely promising and effective formula for overcoming all the obstacles which have frustrated economic progress in Asia. But how true is the view that in a mere forty years the Soviet Union pulled itself up by its own bootstraps from a *tabula rasa* of utter backwardness, resembling that of Asia today, to attain its present formidable industrial stature?

The data for a rigorous comparison of the level of economic development in Russia, say, in 1913, with that of the Asian countries in the mid-twentieth century, are hard to come by, and even harder to interpret. However, a quick survey shows persuasively that when the Soviets came to power, they took over an economy with much more favorable preconditions for rapid industrial growth than exist in Asia today. First, they were able to build on foundations laid during an extended period of prior capitalist development. Secondly, and more important, they disposed of a ratio of population to natural resources, land in particular, that compared very favorably to that of most Asian countries. In other words, when the

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Soviets started, they already had the boots, and the straps to pull on, whereas contemporary Asia is, relatively speaking, still barefooted.

Capacity to Save

Let us first look at the Soviet starting point with regard to one crucial condition of economic progress: the portion of national income saved from consumption and applied to capital formation. It is a familiar proposition that to bring about an initial, and substantial, increase in the very low savings and investment ratio characteristic of poor and backward countries is to make the most important, and also the hardest, first step on the road from economic stagnation to progress. In one recent simple statement of this proposition, "communities in which the national income per head is not increasing invest 4 or 5 percent of their incomes per annum or less, whilst progressive economies invest 12 percent per annum or more." [2]

Data bearing directly on the rate of savings and investment in Tsarist Russia are woefully lacking, but what little information there is suggests that by 1913 Russia was well on the way from being a 5 percent saver to becoming a 12 percent saver. The eminent economist S. Prokopovich, in a discussion of this point, refers to estimates (by himself and others) which put the 1913 Russian "national savings" as high as 10 percent of "national income." [3]

Fortunately, there is better evidence to indicate that Imperial Russia had by then developed a "progressive economy," *i.e.*, that real national income per head had been increasing over several decades prior to 1913. The increase was irregular and slow, since population was growing fairly fast while agriculture—the dominant economic sector—was growing haltingly (though still fast enough to allow per capita food output to rise).[4] Industry, however, although it contributed only one-fifth of national income by 1913, had been undergoing fairly rapid growth; according to one recent estimate,[5] the rate of growth was some 5 percent per annum over the long period 1860-1913.

This extended period of active industrial growth has important bearing on the question of pre-Soviet Russia's savings capacity, as the profits of nonfarm enterprise play an important role in augmenting the supply of savings in the early phases of economic development. That the stock of nonfarm capital accumulated in the capitalist phase of Russian history, and then inherited by the Soviet "public sector," was far from negligible is suggested by the volume of industrial production attained by 1913. The common view that pre-World War I Russia was extremely backward industrially is fully justified only if one compares her output levels with those of the advanced Western countries at that time. If the comparison is with contemporary Asia, however, a somewhat different picture emerges. In terms of total output of mining and manufacturing, Russia in 1913 was clearly ahead of both India and China at the outset of their respective first Five-Year Plans, and therefore very far ahead indeed of any other Asian country, save Japan. In terms of per capita output, Russia appears to have had a clear edge over India even as of 1956, when India passed from her first into her second Five-Year Plan, after a one-third expansion of industrial output in the preceding five years. This is shown by the following table of the ratios by which Russian per capita output of selected commodities exceeded India's or *vice versa*:[6]

Russia—1913 *(India 1956 =1)*		India—1956 *(Russia 1913 =1)*	
Steel	7	Electric power	2
Coal	2	Mineral fertilizers	2
Sulfuric acid	2	Bicycles	4
Soda ash	6	Cement	1
Caustic soda	4	Diesel motors	1
Cotton fabrics	1.4		
Paper	4		
Locomotives	8		
Sewing machines	6		

The evidence at hand is too flimsy to judge whether pre-Soviet Russia, in the currently fashionable phrase, had achieved a "take-off into self-sustaining growth." There are good reasons to believe, however, that even before the advent of the "Soviet model," the Russian economy had been well out of the phase of economic stagnation, and had embarked on a period of rising per capita national income, accompanied (and made possible) by an increasing supply of savings for capital formation.

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[2] W. Arthur Lewis, *The Theory of Economic Growth*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1955, p. 225.

[3] S. N. Prokopovich, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR*, (The Economy of the USSR) Chekhov Publishing House, New York, 1952, Vol. II, pp. 334-336.

[4] Cf., *e.g.*, Colin Clark, *A Critique of Russian Statistics*, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1939, pp. 13-16.

[5] By Raymond Goldsmith, cited in G. Warren Nutter, "Industrial Growth in the Soviet Union," *American Economic Review*, May 1958, pp. 403-408.

[6] The reader is cautioned to accept this comparison for what it is worth. The criterion of selection of the commodities covered was the availability of comparable data.

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This would imply that the "Soviet model" cannot take credit for breaking the impasse which still confronts so much of non-Communist Asia: *i.e.,* the problem of bringing about a rate of net investment that would permit capital formation on a scale sufficient to achieve the gains in productivity required to make growth of production exceed the rapid growth of population. The Soviet prototype must confine its claim to efficacy in raising the investment ratio from the respectable 1913 figure to the distinctively high levels (of 20 or more percent of national income) achieved in the USSR since the late 1920's.

For Asian countries still concerned with the problem of initial acceleration of savings (especially those which reject the coercive features of the Soviet model and which hope to raise per capita consumption while raising savings), such levels of investment are unattainable, save in some distant future. Fixing their sights on that future, they can well bear in mind the remarkable example of Japan, with its singularly high propensity to save and its capacity to submit to taxation and other less than "totalitarian" restraints on consumption.[7]

As far as Asia's more immediate tasks are concerned, India's progress, with all its ups and downs, provides a moderately heartening example that planning under democracy can put even a very poor country on the first hard stretch of the road to being a "12 percent saver." India has raised its rate of investment from 5 percent of national income in 1951 to 7.3 percent in 1956, and hopes to approach 11 percent by 1961, with relatively little foreign assistance: domestic savings, according to the Second Five-Year Plan will rise from 7.0 percent of national income in 1956 to 9.7 percent in 1961. India's hope is to combine these gains with modest increases in per capita consumption, by some 2 percent annually. Her actual progress since 1956 has been fairly consistent with the requirements of the Second Five-Year Plan, with investment doing somewhat better, and consumption a little worse, than the plan foretold.

The Quest for "Surplus Produce"

It would be premature to conclude, however, that India has won the race of output expansion against her rapid population growth and against what Myrdal conveniently calls pressures for "initial welfare." Other countries in non-Communist Asia have not, of course, even embarked upon this race. Indeed, little optimism is warranted on this score if one turns to another set of important dissimilarities between the points of departure of economic development in the USSR and in Asia—Communist and non-Communist countries alike.

To do this, it is necessary to consider primarily the problems of agriculture, for the industrialization potential of a poor and predominantly agricultural economy depends very heavily upon the excess of its food production over consumption by the farm population. When one-half or more of national income originates in agriculture, food withheld from consumption becomes a major component of national savings. Furthermore, industrialization and urbanization require the feeding and clothing of nonfarm labor and its dependents, and it is agriculture that supplies their wage goods. Adam Smith's words on this fundamental relationship still apply literally to contemporary Asia:

It is the surplus produce of the country only, or what is over and above the maintenance of the cultivators, that constitutes the subsistence of the town, which can therefore increase only with the increase of the surplus produce.[8]

Precise comparisons on this point are difficult, but even a quick look at the pertinent data will show that Tsarist Russia could spare very much more "over and above the maintenance of cultivators" than most of Asia can today.

Russian grain production in 1913, a good crop year, was 82 million tons, or about 580 kilograms per capita. Even without the Soviet mechanisms of forced collection, nearly 21 million tons of grain was marketed outside the village. Of this, 9 million tons were exported, which still left something like 10 million tons for the "subsistence of the town," or roughly 400 kilograms per-head of the urban population (not all of this, needless to say, for direct human consumption).

Russian peasant consumption of grain for food around 1913 has been estimated at 265 kilograms per capita.[9] This figure, of course, denoted acute rural poverty, but one should bear in mind the important fact that this poverty prevailed *after* Russian "cultivators" had relinquished a very sizeable margin of produce to "the town."

Let us now turn to Asia. India in 1956 (also a good crop year), with 250 million more mouths to feed than Russia had in 1913, produced a smaller grain crop, 72

[7] However, Asians should also bear in mind that neither the Japanese nor any other non-Soviet model provides a painless shortcut to development, and that any *Wirtschaftswunder* has to be dearly bought. For some sobering and well-stated reflections on this, see G. Myrdal, *An International Economy,* Harper & Bros., New York, 1956, pp. 160-166.

[8] Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations,* Book III, Chapter I.

[9] N. Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR,* Stanford, 1949, p. 183.

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million tons,[10] or 190 kilograms per capita. Clearly, there is very little margin here for the "subsistence of the town." Yet proportionately India's urban population is just about the same as Russia's was in 1913, and in absolute terms it is more than double. Not surprisingly, even to maintain an "average intake of food . . . below accepted nutritional standards,"[11] India has been importing grain, and expects to go on importing at a rate which has recently been revised upward from previous estimates—namely, to between 2.5 and 3 million tons a year.[12]

Communist China, according to official statistics, is substantially better off than India in per capita grain output, with somewhat less than 300 kilograms in 1956. But again, this is just about half the Russian rate of 1913. Out of a total food grain output of 193 million tons in 1956-57, the Chinese government's net collection and purchase for sale to urban areas (and exports) totalled 21 million tons, exactly the volume marketed by Russian agriculture in 1913; in China's case, however, this volume is to be shared by an urban population of 88 million, compared with Russia's 25 million in 1913.[13]

It must be emphasized again that this picture is imprecise and rough, as there are smaller countries in Asia which are food exporters, while the food deficits of others reflect specialization in the export of agricultural raw materials. Yet, with regard to the ability of Asia to sustain industrialization and urbanization, it is an inauspicious fact that the region surveyed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (excluding mainland China) is a net importer of cereals—to the tune of 8 million tons in 1957 and on a rising scale in more recent years.

If one considers the task of the Asian countries to increase the "subsistence of the town" concomitantly with progress toward industrialization, and contrasts it with past Soviet experience with the very same problem, the long-term prospects for Asia seem even more disconcerting than the immediate future. Such a comparison also confirms that Asia—Communist and non-Communist alike—has little to learn from Soviet experience.

There is a remarkable disparity between the absolute population increase which the Soviet regime has had to provide for and the population increments which Asia as a whole, and its large countries individually, must expect in the future. Today, there are only 50 million more people living in the USSR than there were on the same territory in 1913, nearly a half-century ago. India, with a present population of close to 400 million, expects an increase by 50 million in the next ten years. China, with some 640 million people now, will in three or four years add 40 million. The various disasters which disrupted normal demographic trends in the USSR are well known. Paradoxically, their effect on Soviet population history was remarkably fortunate for the regime: the net population increase in the USSR during its industrialization period has been trifling compared to what is in store for Asia. In consequence, the increase which the Soviets have had to bring about in the total supply of food and other consumer goods has been relatively trifling, too.

Agricultural Resources

The Soviet task of providing for this comparatively modest rise in population was further eased by the fact that the agricultural resources per capita commanded by the USSR at its inception, however meager by comparison with more fortunate countries elsewhere, were vastly superior to those of less fortunate Asia. Russia in 1913 had a ratio of 0.75 hectares of cultivated land per inhabitant. For India, the same ratio in 1954-1955 was 0.37. Arable land in 1913 Russia amounted to 1.1 hectares per capita,[14] while China in 1956 had 0.2 hectares. Taiwan, Japan and South Korea are even worse off.[15]

Moreover—and this again in sharp and favorable contrast to Asia—the Soviet Union, judging by its record, disposed of considerable opportunities for *extensive* additions to agricultural output. Cultivated plowland per capita has kept up with the population increase, amounting to exactly 1.1 hectares both in 1913 and 1956,[16] an equality which largely reflects the plowing of the "virgin lands" in recent years. At the same time, there was some easy-to-come-by "intensification." More

[10] Total output of rice, wheat, barley, corn (maize) millet, and sorghum (*ECAFE, Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East 1957*, Bangkok, 1958 pp. 199-200). This aggregate, I believe, is more closely comparable to that for Russian grain output than the lower figures reported by India for "food grains" production, *e.g.*, 69 million tons for 1956/57 (Government of India, *Second Five Year Plan, Draft Outline*, p. 91.)

[11] *Second Five Year Plan, Draft Outline*, p. 5.

[12] ECAFE *1957 Survey*, op. cit., pp. 8, 85.

[13] Data on Communist China from ECAFE *1957 Survey*, pp. 95, 109.

[14] Strictly speaking, "plowed land" for Russia, which is less than "arable land." Data for Russia was taken from *Kommunist*, 1957, No. 12, pp. 64-65; for Asia, from ECAFE *1957 Survey*, and Government of India, *Second Five Year Plan*, 1956.

[15] On balance, climatic differences probably work in Asia's favor. That they may not be too important is suggested by the fact that Russia's average grain yield in 1913, at 0.85 tons/hectare, was the same as India's in 1956.

[16] *Kommunist, loc. cit.*

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of the plowed land is now under crops, and cropped acreage has risen from 0.75 hectares per capita in 1913 to nearly one hectare in 1956. By contrast, "the scope for increasing the area under cultivation is extremely limited" in India.[17] China hopes, in the long run, to reclaim and add a maximum 33 million hectares to its present 112 million of arable land. Should it do so in ten years, it would, at the present rate of population growth, merely have maintained its present arable land per capita; in fact it would then possess *two-thirds* of the present arable acreage of the USSR, *for a population nearly four times as large.*

The problem of generating "surplus produce" to sustain urbanization is so very crucial to Asia's industrialization hopes, that a few more remarks on Soviet performance is this respect are in order. In the mid-1920's, the USSR went through its "grain crisis," when voluntary marketings by the peasantry were reduced to about half the 1913 volume. It was a mild crisis, as urban population had increased but slightly since 1913, and nearly one-half of 1913 marketings had been exported, whereas by 1927-28, grain exports had dwindled to a very small figure. Yet the expectation of a rapid growth of the urban population in the wake of accelerated industrialization, then under planning, was sufficient to prompt the authorities to enforce collectivization and thus to equip themselves with a mechanism for the forcible collection of "surplus produce." The devastating effects on farm production that followed are well-known.

Once the worst of these effects had been overcome, the Soviets centered their attention on perfecting the mechanism of *collection* of farm produce. The new institutions they had contrived for farm *production* were anything but perfect, and it was not until 1953 that the Soviets officially and publicly recognized that neglect of production had been carried too far—a recognition that reflected, inter alia, the urgent need finally to let "the countryside" share in the fruits of industrialization, by providing it with higher levels of real income. The effects of these incentives on the growth of agricultural output indicates the great expansion of opportunities that were, even then, still inherent in Soviet agriculture.

Asia's main concern is, of course, production. It would be impossible to elaborate, within the confine of this article, on what the Asians are thinking—and, fortunately, doing—to keep their slender margin of "surplus produce" from diminishing or from disappearing altogether. Suffice it to say that the very real possibility that this margin will be eaten up by the swelling multitude of the "cultivators," rather than used to feed the growing urban population, should be seriously considered by those who are in charge of mapping the rate, scale, and structural pattern of their countries' economic progress. This is particularly true for the non-Communist countries, which are trying to prevent their very low consumption levels from falling—and are, in fact, even hopeful of seeing them rise without at the same time inhibiting the rate of savings and the process of industrialization as a whole.

Given this concern with consumer welfare, Asian leaders must surely not think in terms of "planning for the single purpose . . . of the most rapid industrialization," but rather for the "harmony of the different branches" of their economies. Since they will be haunted inexorably by the ghost of Malthus, and of Ricardo's Iron Law (which the Soviet leaders never were), they may well find better guidance for their development priorities in another passage from Adam Smith's classic, rather than in Lenin's work or in the current *Voprosy Ekonomiki:*

> **As subsistence is, in the nature of things, prior to conveniency and luxury, so the industry which procures the former, must necessarily be prior to that which ministers to the latter. The cultivation and improvement of the country, therefore, which affords subsistence, must necessarily be prior to the increase of the town, which furnishes only the means of conveniency and luxury.[18]**

Rural Overpopulation and Unemployment

To emphasize that Asia's food situation and prospects are desperately precarious is but another way of saying that its poverty severely limits the supply of capital and wage goods which it can devote to industrialization, and thus also constricts the rate at which it can hope to expand industry. More particularly, Asia faces the formidably difficult problem of accelerating this expansion sufficiently to make full use of the one resource which it has in superabundance—labor. Most of its manpower is employed in agriculture which, as has been stressed before, is acutely overcrowded. Much of the farm labor force contributes less to food output than it does to food consumption. In some countries, excess supply of farm labor and rural misery have promoted an unhealthy kind of urbanization, with cities growing in advance of the increase in urban employment opportunities. The result is a backlog of urban unemployment, both open and disguised. Finally, as a function of generally high rates of population growth, the population of

[17] *Second Five Year Plan,* p. 260.

[18] *Wealth of Nations, loc. cit.* "Conveniency and luxury" may be interpreted here broadly enough to include H-bombs and missiles, as well as steel home-produced at any cost.

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working age is growing rapidly; in China the labor force is currently increasing by five or six million annually, and in India by about two million.

Let us inquire again whether Soviet performance in dealing with the employment aspects of development holds any lessons for Asia. At first blush, the bald figures of Soviet net accomplishment in this respect suggest that the USSR has demonstrated the capability to find fast relief from rural overpopulation (if only in a mild form compared to Asia's) through rapid industrialization, and generally to combine economic development with full employment. From the start of the planning era to the outbreak of World War II, the Soviet Union achieved a remarkable shift in its employment structure. Non-farm employment trebled from 1928 to 1940, and the urban population more than doubled, from 26 million in 1926 to 56 million in 1939. In a single decade, 1928-1937, the share of agriculture in total employment declined dramatically from 80 to 56 per cent. Between 1926 and 1939, the rural population even declined absolutely, from 121 to 115 million. The trend towards industrialization and urbanization of the Soviet labor force resumed after World War II. Even though agriculture's share in total employment—43 per cent in 1956—is still extremely high compared to North America or Northwest Europe, it has declined to nearly the level of present-day Japan.

One need not get involved in the difficult question of whether the USSR has actually eliminated excess labor in agriculture or has merely succeeded in hiding it in a system of farming well suited for masking underemployment, to conclude that it has at least achieved substantial relief from whatever problem of rural overcrowding it inherited. The rural population on present Soviet territory declined from 131 million in 1913 to 113 million in 1956. Compared to the spectacular reductions in rural population associated with the British and other Western industrial revolutions, this 14 per cent decline, spread over nearly half a century, was neither rapid, nor did it represent a smooth absorption of the labor supply into the expanding industrial sectors of the economy.

The transformation in the Soviet employment structure was in part the product of the coercive features of Soviet planning. Collectivization, as was noted earlier, had become an efficient device for collecting "surplus produce"; and a liberal definition of what constituted "surplus," reinforced by appropriate tax and price policies, depressed farm incomes and helped to drive peasants into industrial occupations. The severe controls on consumption, enforced on the urban side by rationing in the critical periods and by wage and price controls generally (non-farm real wages declined heavily from 1928 to 1940), allowed a high rate of capital

THE ROADS TO DEVELOPMENT

In our time many countries have freed themselves from colonial dependence. Having inherited a backward economy, the peoples of these countries are seeking ways to pull their countries out of their backwardness and onto the wide road of independent development and promotion of their economy and culture. Two roads lie before them—the road of capitalist development and the road of socialist development. . . .

The experience of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union is an obvious example, an open book that tells how our people, during 42 years of which almost 20 were taken up by wars imposed upon us and by postwar economic rehabilitation, changed their country into the world's second strongest . . . power.

—From N. S. Khrushchev's speech of Sept. 30, 1959, in Peking, reported by New China News Agency on the same date.

Can one get a classless society with equal opportunities for all through peaceful methods? Communism has definitely allied itself to violence; its language is of violence, its thought is violent, and it does not seek to change by persuasion but by coercion, destruction and extermination, and has no acceptable ideal . . . I prefer the old pagan approach of tolerance. Forcible imposition of ideas on any large section of people is bound ultimately to fail. This was exemplified by the Suez incident; also what happened in Hungary . . . Wrong means will not lead to right results: this is no longer an ethical doctrine but a practical proposition. . . .

What happened in the past in the advanced countries has little bearing on us because they were better off than India today in terms of per capita income before their industrialization began. Marxist economics is in many ways out of date. We have thus to do our own thinking, profiting by the example of others, always remembering the basic approach of peaceful means, rightful ends, and the old ideal of the life force which is the inner base of everything that exists.

—From a letter of Prime Minister Nehru to his followers, published in the Manchester Guardian, Nov. 17, 1958.

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formation, which in turn provided the factories and power projects for the growing industrial labor force.

But not even forced collectivization and the other repressive devices of economic control explain by themselves the decline in Soviet rural population. In perhaps equal measure, this result was brought about by famine and the deportations of the Stalin era—events which must have been reflected in the 1937 census clearly enough to cause its suppression. World War II carried on the decimation in a new form, and in inflicting a new population disaster upon the USSR, it too assisted the regime in combining industrialization with full employment.

Industrialization: Cure for Unemployment?

Assuming and hoping that the Asian countries will not be aided, as the USSR was, by self-inflicted or extraneously imposed catastrophies, it seems to this author that they cannot look to industrialization for more than partial and limited relief of their employment problems, whether they use coercive techniques or not. In other words, even if they succeed in increasing non-farm employment at a rapid rate, the increase will still be insufficient to prevent concurrent growth of the agricultural population and work force.

This much seems to be acknowledged by the Indian Second Plan, which warns against "the hope that full employment will be secured" by the end of the planning period, and which sets as its modest aim "that at least the deterioration in the unemployment situation should be arrested." Over the decade 1951-1961 India expects its urban population to increase by one-third, and hopes rather than expects to match this increase with new job opportunities. Even this rapid rate of urbanization, however, will bring no relief to the crowded countryside. On the contrary, over the same period the Indian rural population is expected to grow by 30 million.[19]

Similarly, in China, urban population has increased by 57 percent from 1949 to 1956, or by more than 30 million. Simutaneously, however, the rural population has grown by over 60 million. In spite of a phenomenally high growth rate of industrial output, Chinese authorities have in effect acknowledged that urbanization has been speeded not only by growing demand for labor but also by flight from rural poverty and famine. They have had to try to curb the "increase of the town," first by restricting migration from the villages, and since 1955 by expulsion of rural migrants from the overcrowded cities.

[19] *Second Five Year Plan,* pp. 109 ff.

The Chinese case shows that even when industrialization is spurred to the utmost by Soviet-style planning, its "employment content" (to use the Indian planners' graphic term) is insufficient to absorb more than a modest portion of the labor force increase. Even propagandistic statements which try to belittle the employment problem intimate that Chinese authorities expect industry to absorb only 800,000 to 900,000 workers annually over the next six years.[20]

One may note at this point that even Japan's relative success in industrialization has not yet brought a satisfactory solution of the employment problem. Although the share of agriculture in total employment has declined significantly since the postwar peak (to 41 per cent in 1956), that of manufacturing, mining and construction has risen only slightly, while the share of tertiary industries has sharply increased—particularly in what has been called the "vague, relatively unproductive types of service, which were often little more than a form of underemployment."[21]

All told, it seems clear that "industrialization" will have a different meaning in Asia from what it had in Europe or North America, and that in the foreseeable future there is no hope for the Asian countries to achieve even that incomplete shift in the farm/non-farm employment ratio which the USSR—aided, to stress the point again, by a relatively favorable initial position and by its abnormal demographic history—has brought about to date.

Conclusion

Economic progress in Asia is impeded by a variety of extremely difficult obstacles the majority of which the Soviet Union was lucky enough never to have to cope with. Among these are the following:

1). *The problem of initiating the first and hardest major increase in the ratio of savings to national income, which is the ineluctable prerequisite to economic advances.* It has been shown that the Soviet Union started building on economic foundations laid by an extended period of prior capitalist development which, like the Soviet ratio of population to natural resources, compared favorably to the current conditions in most of Asia. The "Soviet model" is thus hardly applicable to the long-range Asian problem of capital formation.

2). *The problem of expanding agricultural output sufficiently to overtake rapid population growth by the*

[20] Su Chung, "Facts About China's Population," *Peking Review,* July 1, 1958, p. 10.

[21] ECAFE *1957 Survey,* p. 51.

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wide margin needed to sustain industrialization—starting from a most discouraging condition of rural overpopulation and land scarcity. All over Asia, including Communist China (despite the priority accorded heavy industry and transportation in the allocation of state-controlled investment), recognition has taken firm root that agricultural output is crucially important for the development of the economy as a whole; that contrary to the example of the earlier Soviet "model," emphasis must be put on production rather than collection of agricultural produce; and that, again in divergence from earlier Soviet practice, only intensification in cultivation can offer significant increases in Asian food production.

3). *The problem of finding reasonably productive employment for a labor force, rural and urban, inexorably destined to expand at a frighteningly rapid rate.* Again, even Communist China, after having followed in its first plan the Soviet preference for capital-intensive industrial techniques, embarked on its "small plants campaign" (a movement to set up smaller and much less elaborate enterprises in a wide range of industries), allowing for lower capital-labor ratios in production, enabling industry to spread to the countryside, and contributing to the immediate utilization of excess labor.[22] It is noteworthy that if China has looked to foreign models for this venture, they have been Asian and not Soviet, as the Soviet Union (until recently at least) has never shown much interest in capital-saving techniques. The Chinese Communists were preceded in this respect by the attention devoted to "cottage industry" and to the entire "conflict between the competing claims of capital formation . . . and the provision of larger employment" in India's Second Plan,[23] and by Japan's spontaneous "small plants campaign."

4). *The problem of population control in a situation where the death rate is being rapidly reduced while lower birth rates remain slow and hard to achieve.* The Chinese Communists' recent willingness to abandon doctrinal rigidity in this field and to promote birth control represents another significant Asian departure from the Soviet prototype. It is another question, of course, whether even a determined and doctrinally uninhibited birth-control campaign would achieve the desired effect quickly enough, at a time when the art of death control is so much ahead of birth control. It is also doubtful that a totalitarian regime has any advantages over others in this sphere. It has recently been observed that even though the means of production have become public, the means of reproduction are still private.[24] One may note that, in this departure from the Soviet model also, Communist China was again preceded by non-Communist Asia. There is India's determined effort to confront the problem, and there is also the striking postwar decline in Japan's birth rate, a development which would indeed be worth copying, if only one knew how.

It may be observed in conclusion that, having never been compellingly challenged by these problems, the Soviet Government has failed to evolve any policies for dealing with the tasks that will make or break Asian economic development. Hence, quite apart from the coercive aspects of the Soviet model, the particular path of economic development taken by the Soviet Union can be of little practical interest to the countries of Asia.

[22] The author is indebted here to Richard N. Moorsteen's article "Economic Prospects for Communist China," *World Politics,* January 1959. For a careful argument urging overpopulated countries to regard excess labor as a concealed potential for saving and capital formation, see Ragnar Nurkse, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1953, *passim.*

[23] *Second Five Year Plan, op. cit.,* pp. 109 ff., 429 ff.

[24] Leopold Labedz, "Population Policies in China and Russia," *Soviet Survey,* No. 24, April-June 1958, p. 43.

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The Hungarian October

Thirteen Days That Shook the Kremlin: Imre Nagy and the Hungarian Revolution,
by Tibor Meray.
F. A. Praeger, New York, 1959.

La Vérité sur l'Affaire Nagy: Les Faits, Les Documents, Les Temoignages Internationaux
(The Truth about the Nagy Affair: Facts, Documents, International Testimony).
Edition Plon, Paris, 1958.

This is Communist Hungary,
edited by Robert Delaney.
Henry Regnery, Chicago, 1958.

The Undefeated,
by George Paloczi-Horvath.
Secker and Warburg, London, 1959.

Reviewed by Paul Landy

IT WAS ANATOLE FRANCE who predicted that the next great deluge would be not water but ink. Side by side with the "eternal human themes" which stimulate the steady flow of the written word, certain events with particular dramatic and emotional impact tend to open the flood-gates to a vast sea of print. Among such events the tragedy of the Hungarian revolution can be counted as one of the momentous experiences of the recent past: certainly it has captured the imagination of many writers.

During the last two years dozens of books—political studies, novels, autobiographies and eye-witness accounts — have been published on the Hungarian revolution. With very few exceptions, these books are either passionate indictments, tending to view everything as black or white, encompassing a bundle of impulses and reactions, moving always on the fringes of the great issues —or in the case of such famed writers as George Mikes or James Michener, smoothly written "professional" works, lacking in more subtle values, drawing superficial deductions without adequate knowledge of recent history and the ideological-political background in Hungary.

The four books reviewed in these columns offer a welcome contrast to the above categories. They try to get to the heart of the complex and fundamental conflict of interests, ideas and aspirations that erupted in the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

TIBOR MERAY'S *Thirteen Days that Shook the Kremlin* is a masterful account offering the first truly human portrait of Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister during the revolution. The author was a Kossuth prize-winner (a top literary honor in Hungary) and a journalist on the staff of *Szabad Nep,* the Communist Party paper. During the first premiership of Nagy—from June 1953 to March 1955—Meray underwent a process of disenchantment, joining the ranks of those young Communist intellectuals who, in his own words, "have lost their illusions and have come to hate those who have abused their ideals." Prior to and during the revolution, Meray fought with considerable personal courage in the vanguard of liberalization. In November 1956, after the second Soviet armed intervention had crushed the revolution, Meray fled to Yugoslavia and after a short stay in Belgrade went to Paris, where he is presently living.

His book is above all a storehouse of testimony, providing much new, valuable and detailed documentation on the sequence of events during the thirteen historical days of the revolution as well as on the seemingly enigmatic personality and contradictory behavior of Imre Nagy. The author has made a meticulously honest attempt to resolve the tangles in conflicting versions about such crucial issues as the role of Nagy, the contrasts in Moscow's behavior, the controversial impact of Western broadcasting propaganda, the diverging trends in the course of the revolt, the factor of Suez, *etc.*

Mr. Meray guides his readers with fairness and objectivity through the various phases of the revolution, giving a point-by-point analysis of the gamut of issues involved. His interpretative chapters, scrutinizing the elements of Imre Nagy's human and political tragedy through the prism of those turbulent revolutionary days, are not equaled in either scope or depth by any work on

Mr. Landy, a Hungarian journalist who fled his native country after the October 1956 uprising and is now living in Vienna, last appeared on these pages with "Retreat and Reaction in Eastern Europe," July-August 1958.

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the subject hitherto published. The curious paradox of Hungary, which under Stalinism was in the grip of one of the more notoriously repressive regimes, but which in the post-Stalin period experienced the furthest disintegration to date of a Communist-totalitarian society, has been puzzling the experts on Communist affairs ever since the events of 1956. In the opinion of this reviewer, Mr. Meray's interpretation is the most reasonable and authentic that has been forwarded. Apart from the factors of outraged national feeling, the presence of Soviet troops, low living standards, the aftermath of the bloody political purges, the influence of the Yugoslav heresy and the senseless dogmatism of the Rakosi-Gerö leadership, there was in addition a peculiar Hungarian factor which became a decisive impetus to the uprising. Writes Mr. Meray:

It was only in Hungary that . . . four months after Stalin's death a forthright denunciation of Stalinist policy had occurred—the regime made a public and shocking self-criticism. And it was only in Hungary that in the following months and years, two contradictory and visible currents (Nagy *contra* Rakosi) had expressed themselves inside the party.[1]

The chain of events in the intra-party fight had inevitably been leading to a dramatic climax. When the people rose up in arms and the Soviet intervention transformed an internal struggle into a war of independence—

. . . Nagy found himself in the state's highest office with a hundred-fold responsibilities, but with only a tenth of the real power he should have wielded. And not only was he a prisoner of the tanks and of the sub-machine guns, of the telephone switchboard and of the Stalinist apparatus of the party headquarters, he was held prisoner by his own ideas too.

In the first phase of the revolution, when the people made clear that they rejected the entire concept of the one-party system, Imre Nagy still could visualize only those measures which conformed to the doctrine of the party. In this he lagged far behind the desires of the people. The author provides fresh evidence of how Nagy in the second phase of the revolution caught up with the pace of developments and with popular sentiment. Following Moscow's famous declaration of October 30, offering to withdraw Soviet troops from the city and to negotiate for their removal from Hungary, Nagy became an independent political leader in his own right. After the Soviet leaders had given their assent, Nagy reorganized his cabinet on a multi-party basis, thereby abolishing one-party rule, and announced that negotiations had been started for the evacuation of Soviet troops.

Within two days, however, the menacing clouds of the second Soviet intervention began to form; and on November 4 the Soviet armed forces launched their counterattack and installed the Kadar government. Mr. Meray rejects the thesis that the declaration of October 30 and the ensuing Soviet concessions were merely tactical moves to divert attention from an invasion already in planning. Although necessarily moving in the realm of conjecture, the author offers the explanation that the *volte-face* in Moscow's attitude was prompted by a variety of compelling internal and external factors, such as the realization that the existence of a neutral, de-communized Hungary would spell the doom of the satellite belt, reluctance to lose Soviet military bases in Hungary, a massive attack by the Malenkov-Molotov-Kaganovich wing against Khrushchev and Mikoyan, and—probably not the least consideration — pressure for intervention from the "orthodox" satellite regimes in Czechoslovakia and Rumania. While the sudden switch was dictated primarily by domestic and bloc politics, the Suez affair undoubtedly made the Soviet about-face easier.

Some of the author's conclusions and assumptions are not altogether convincing. Mr. Meray seems to overestimate the role that the Communists would have played in a future Hungary, had the revolution triumphed. At the same time, he tends to underrate the potential strength of the moderate and extreme rightwing forces in the same situation. Because his book is essentially an account of the revolutionary period *per se,* it does not and could not illuminate every question of long-range cause and effect. Nevertheless, even with its occasional misinterpretations and inconsistencies, the book is required reading on the Hungarian uprising.

OF COMPARABLE INTEREST and import is the study, *La Vérité sur l'Affaire Nagy,* edited by a group of close collaborators of the former Premier and originally published in Paris.[2] This collection of documents, presented in the form of a "counter-trial" *(contre-procès)* to elucidate the truth of the so-called Nagy affair, pulls down the entire structure of lies, half-truths and distortions which fill the five volumes of the official Hungarian white book defending Nagy's execution.

The editors set out to dissect sentence by sentence the

[1] It might be argued, of course, that in Poland also, two tendencies—the Stalinist and the "liberal"—developed in the party long before the October events. In contrast to the Polish situation, however, the Nagy (that is, the liberal) faction in Hungary had not succeeded in establishing control of the party prior to the uprising—hence the bitterness and violence in October 1956, which Poland fortunately avoided.

[2] Published in English translation in October 1959 by F. A. Praeger, New York.

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indictment against Nagy, contraposing the official version to the accounts, speeches and stories published or broadcast by the very same regime prior to Nagy's trial. The book is devoid of harsh epithets or expressions of shocked disgust; the facts speak for themselves and the editors leave it to the readers to draw the necessary deductions. The result is one of the most valuable and revealing documentary studies of recent years.

The first part of the book covers the prologue to the Nagy trial, revealing the perfidy of Janos Kadar and his associates, who tricked their former comrades-in-arms into leaving the Yugoslav embassy with a promise of safe conduct, then arrested them and ultimately had them executed. The irrefutable evidence shows that the Kadar regime, which during the last two years has been taking pains to project an image of civilized friendliness, could never have had any pretensions to moral authority. On November 11, 1956, Kadar announced:

I must say in all frankness, having been a member of Imre Nagy's cabinet, that neither Nagy himself, nor the political group of which he was a part would knowingly have helped the counterrevolutionary forces.

On January 6, 1957, the charge of treason against Nagy was voiced for the first time. The chronology of events in 1957-58 indicates that the fate of the Nagy group was inextricably tied to policy twists and turns *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia. One is left with the impression that the renewed tug-of-war between Moscow and Belgrade was the immediate factor sealing the fate of Nagy.

The main part of the book revolves around the indictment against Nagy, marshalling a long line of arguments and documentation to prove the deliberate falsification of the record on important issues, the countless factual errors and inconsistencies that pervaded the "script" of the secret trial. All the evidence at public disposal shows that the charges of Nagy's "fomenting a plot to overthrow the legal government" and committing other treasonable "crimes" are untenable, and indeed at variance with previous records published by the same regime that sentenced the defendants to death. As Albert Camus writes in his foreword, the book shows that "breach of faith, malfeasance, supreme disregard of international law, violation of diplomatic and parliamentary immunity and kidnapping were the methods used in the murder of Nagy . . . that Nagy was murdered, not lawfully sentenced."

THE VOLUME *This is Communist Hungary* (edited by Robert Delaney) is a collection of essays which throws light upon and takes the reader into corners of life in a Communist country that "outsiders" could never explore. The contributors—journalists, economists, educators—cover family life, religion, press and propaganda, music, youth and last but not least the economic sub-structure and political super-structure in Hungary prior to the revolution. Despite occasional flabby generalities, the authors more or less successfully fill in the picture of a country boiling with bitterness and rebellious feelings, a people at once apathetic and intense, seeing the blank dreariness of life through a haze of unhappy anger.

It is implicit in the nature of such widely diverging topics that the reader sometimes loses sight of the whole concept and finds the abundance of repetitive, harsh adjectives somewhat tiresome. Also, the variety of contributors inevitably results in differences in the style, general level and analytical depth of the studies. Parts of the essays on family life and on the authoritarian state-order suffer particularly from an oversimplified analysis of the Communist pattern in these domains.

On the other hand, the collection as a whole provides excellent background material for students of East European affairs, especially the chapters on education, mass media, religion and musical life. And probably the prime virtue of the book is the fact that it conveys with a poignant air of authenticity the atmosphere and trends prevailing in Hungary on the eve of the revolt.

GEORGE PALOCZI-HORVATH'S *The Undefeated* is a fascinating—though at times irritating and confused—mixture of an autobiography and a political essay. The author, winner of the Atlantic Non-Fiction Prize in 1959, is a foreign correspondent and novelist who spent the war years in the Middle East and London working for the British in the counter-intelligence organization SOE (Special Operations Executive). In 1947 Mr. Paloczi returned to Hungary, where he joined the Communist Party, was appointed editor of a weekly journal and later was assigned to head the Foreign Broadcasting Department of Budapest Radio. In 1949, in connection with the Rajk trial, he was arrested and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment as a British spy. He was released in 1954 during Imre Nagy's first premiership after having spent five years in jail, partly in solitary confinement. In 1956 he began to write for *Irodalmi Ujsag,* the organ of the Hungarian writers. After the Soviet invasion he escaped to London.

His avowed aim is to illuminate his obsession with communism through his life-story and prison experiences. The first twelve chapters form a vivid, perceptive story of prewar Hungary, Europe and of his life as a foreign correspondent. Here, Mr. Paloczi writes with a sustained brilliance and his journalistic-literary *tour-de-force* keeps his reader truly spellbound.

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The second phase of the account deals with his return to Hungary, his imprisonment and the process of his "conversion" from communism. Whenever he writes about the intolerable strains of solitary confinement, about the stage rehearsal for the show-trials, about his captors and fellow-prisoners, about the best and worst of prison life, his writing is endowed with an affective, authentic quality. He relates that after long months of torture and then his experience with the mechanics of the prefabricated trials, he spent a period of a week in a mass cell. Here he had long talks with several workers, who profoundly impressed him with their attitude: "It's not a question of mistakes committed here or there. The whole thing stinks as it is." Describing the cumulative effect of these experiences, he writes:

After two years in prison, at the end of a long and painful process during most of which I still clung to my faith, I suddenly saw the utter bankruptcy and dishonesty of the cause. For a long time afterwards I was a "former Communist," like a religious man who turns into a militant atheist . . . I am now a former "former Communist". . .

It is in the author's attempt to decipher these different phases of the "controlled schizophrenia of Communist obsession" that his account loses some of its force. What emerges in this section of the book is a mixture of a well-written record of personal experiences and a barrage of political-psychological observations which tend to be repetitive and superficial. Vivid and touching prison scenes are dwarfed by long-drawn and loosely-connected political digressions. It is a pity in particular that some of the "sinister profiles" — Matyas Rakosi, Erno Gerö, Erzsebet Andics, Gabor Peter, *etc.*—which the author originally wrote for the London *Times* two years ago have been republished here. These portraits, though interesting, fail to add anything substantially new to our knowledge of "Communist neurosis" and slow the pace of the book.

The closing chapters are again flamboyant, masterful descriptions and personal observations covering the tense revolutionary period. Although Mr. Paloczi conveys the intoxicating atmosphere of the pre-revolutionary thaw, it is regrettable that he denies the significance of the opposition manifested by Hungarian writers and intellectuals before the 20th Soviet Party Congress ever took place.

The Undefeated is above all an intriguing human case history which, despite its uneven construction and inconsistencies, succeeds in its prime objective—to prove that no matter how monolithic the system or how intensive the brain-washing, human beings can never permanently accept the indignity of being deprived of their right to think and to judge for themselves.

"Socialization" in the Land of Socialism

Russia's Children,
by Herschel and Edith Alt.
Bookman Associates, New York, 1959.

Pattern for Soviet Youth,
by Ralph Talcott Fisher, Jr.
Columbia University Press, New York, 1959.

Reviewed by Mark G. Field

THE BOOKS UNDER REVIEW deal with a subject that has received far too little attention to date: the process of "socialization" in the Soviet Union. The term "socialization" is used here not in its more usual economic sense, but in reference to the social and psychological mechanism whereby a child is infused with the values, the character, the skills, the language, the symbolic and even the facial expressions of his elders—and is thus transformed into an integral member of the society. It is in the process of socialization, from infancy to maturity, that the basic personality pattern of the future is acquired, and the same process is also the means by which the culture of the society is passed from generation to generation. Considering that the population of a country renews itself completely every three

A frequent contributor to these pages, Mr. Field is the author of Doctor and Patient in Russia *(Harvard University Press, 1957) and of numerous shorter studies on various aspects of Soviet society.*

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or four generations, the stability and continuity of any social system is largely dependent on the effective socialization of the society's youngest members. By the same token, anyone interested in the study of a society, its cultural change and social dynamics, cannot disregard the functioning of its socialization processes.

The two books reviewed here treat, in very different fashion, important aspects of childhood and adolescence in Soviet society, and they reflect in their approach the varying specializations of the authors. The Alts, whose professional interests lie in the fields of child guidance, child welfare, mental health, juvenile delinquency, community health and social work, are concerned primarily with the "child and the state," and such subjects as family life, medical care, education, delinquency, and mental illness. Their book is a product of a trip to the USSR, during which they visited numerous educational institutions and interviewed leading pedagogues, psychologists and officials, for the purpose of obtaining information on the Soviet approach to the child and then comparing it with American principles of upbringing and education.

MR. FISHER, on the other hand, is an historian (formerly of the Russian Institute at Columbia), who concentrates in his study on an examination of the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), the organization which, together with the affiliated Octobrists and Pioneers, shepherds and molds Soviet youth from primary school age to adulthood. He too had visited Russia, but his work is based on an examination of the records of the twelve Komsomol congresses held between 1918 and 1954. His book is thus an historical study, whereas the Alts' approach is clinical. In its own way, each book whets appetites, opens vistas, and raises many questions; neither provides definitive answers. Of the two, *Russia's Children* is perhaps the richer in perception and depth, even though it lacks Mr. Fisher's impressive scholarship and wealth of knowledge in the Soviet field.

One of the primary interests of the Alts during their investigations in the Soviet Union was the kind of personality Soviet education seeks to shape. They report their impressions as follows:

The image of the ideal personality, which is the goal of Soviet education, embraces such qualities as courage, unselfishness, endurance, capacity to overcome obstacles, ability to swim upstream. Clarity of purpose, tenacity in the matter of reaching a goal, and firmness of will which breaks through all obstacles—these are the qualities that are emphasized by many leaders, including Stalin himself.

All these noble qualities, however, must serve a definite social and political purpose; in themselves and by themselves they are of no value to the Soviet regime. Nowhere, the Alts note, did there seem to be "an understanding of our concept of the uniqueness of the individual and the premium we place upon the development of the individual personality as an end in itself."

What the Alts' found even more striking was the fact that the Soviet specialists showed little concern about feelings, about the emotional life of the child—except to bring it under control. On the assumption that emotions, or concern with emotions, detracts from social tasks and concentration on the building of a Communist society, the aim of child training in the USSR is to impart as high a degree of self-control and discipline as possible. For this purpose fear is used as an important conditioning factor. The Alts were startled, for example, to find in the penal code a classification for "political crimes of children under the age of 14" (this has only recently been revised to the age of 16). As a result of such conditioning, Soviet children often strike Western and particularly American visitors as extremely well-behaved and polite, but at the same time tamed and cowed—lacking in the spontaneity, the joy, and the tears usually associated with childhood. One is reminded of the observations of Santha Rama Rau who, in her book *My Russian Journey*, reported that she had never seen a child misbehave in public, or be wild or noisy or unmanageable. Hardly anywhere had she heard a youngster crying. The typical response to the child who has hurt himself is the admonition *"u nas ne pliachet,"* (we don't cry here), rather than an attempt to console or to comfort him.

AS A RESULT of this one-sided approach, Soviet educators are often baffled when their methods do not produce the expected results. Take, for example, an anti-social act such as stealing. For the Soviet educator, stealing is the result of defective parental or social education or an urgent need for the objects stolen. With better education (or re-education), and with a life of material abundance, stealing is expected to disappear automatically. How, then, can it be explained that there are Soviet children of privileged class parents, well-educated and certainly not suffering from economic want, who nevertheless steal or commit other anti-social acts? Nowhere, the Alts note with amazement, was there recognition that stealing might be a manifestation of emotional conflict in the child.

By the same token, neurosis is attributed to a physiological factor or to some trauma in the child's life (like the war), and that too is expected to disappear with the betterment of social conditions. For the Westerner acquainted with Freudian psychology and aware

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of subconscious and irrational elements in the psyche, this attitude is difficult to understand. The Alts left Russia strikingly impressed by the differences in the Western and Soviet approaches to children, and dismayed by the Soviet neglect of the individual child as a human being endowed with a unique personality. Though they are careful to state that Soviet life can be fully understood only within the framework of its ideology they could only conclude with a disapproving estimate of child rearing values and methods in the USSR.[1]

Russia's Children suffers from its authors' lack of background knowledge on the Soviet Union, and from their apparent lack of familiarity with other literature related to their investigation. This is borne out by their excessive reliance on their own—rather spotty—impressions, as well as on the frequently tendentious information provided by Soviet officials. On the other hand, the Alts' thorough familiarity with the methods and principles of child-rearing in general, and their intelligent and sympathetic approach, make their book a valuable contribution to a subject which has been lamentably neglected in the past, and which deserves more attention in the future.

A DIFFERENT CRITICISM applies to Mr. Fisher's *Pattern for Soviet Youth:* it clearly suffers from the one-dimensional nature of the sources on which it is based. Guided by a desire to base his study on Komsomol materials that would be authoritative, comprehensive and homogeneous enough to permit comparison from period to period, the author concentrated in his research almost exclusively on the records of the Komsomol congresses. The result of his labors is a detailed portrait of the structure and the official role of the Soviet youth organization.

The reader thus learns that it is the purpose of the Komsomol to nurture fresh reserves for the party by inculcating Soviet youth with all the qualities expected in a good Communist (loyalty to the party leadership, iron discipline, self-sacrificing bravery, ideological purity, incessant political vigilance, hatred for the enemy, *etc.*) There is full coverage of the Komsomol's history, showing the failure of its early attempts to gain independence; its subsequent subordination to and strict control by the Communist Party; the slavish adherence of its leadership to the party line; its decimation during the holocaust of Stalin's Great Purges, *etc.*

As a scholarly study Mr. Fisher's book leaves indeed little to be desired, but as a contribution to our knowledge of the Komsomol's impact on Soviet youth its value is limited. For Mr. Fisher deals with structure and policies—and these are important—but nowhere does there emerge a portrait of a live *Komsomolets* or a picture of the Komsomol as a live social organization. The book will be found eminently useful as an important source of information on Komsomol membership and on debates within the Komsomol hierarchy—and as such it is a valuable contribution. It is to be hoped, however—and the author himself expresses the wish—that the study will pave the way for further exploration of the Komsomol and the role it plays in the life of Soviet youth.

BOTH BOOKS reviewed here touch upon the mammoth effort of the Kremlin to change the traditional character of the Russian population. The "New Soviet Man" is to be a "doer," an active personality, unfettered by doubt and mental depression, an enthusiastic supporter of the regime and its goals, and possessed of absolute self-control; a figure, in other words, radically different from the prerevolutionary "Oblomov" (the hero of an early 19th-century novel by Goncharov) who drank tea, talked a lot, and never did anything. And how can this revolution in human nature be brought about? Through devotion to the cause and obedience to orders, which will resolve all personal conflicts and dilemmas.

Such an approach, to be sure, raises a number of questions. To mention two only: How will the individual, and particularly his originality and creativity, be affected by this emotional and intellectual harnessing? And might it not set in motion unanticipated psychological and social forces which might in turn create new serious problems? It may be suggested, for example, that anti-social behavior of a Soviet child may be due not only to "weak parental or Komsomol education," but to a desperate attempt on his part to assert his individuality and attract attention to himself. There are many pitfalls in the Communist approach to socialization, as the Soviets are undoubtedly finding out.

[1] It is worth noting in this connection that according to a report in the *New York Times* of June 8, 1959, the Alts had learned during a more recent trip to the Soviet Union that the Soviets were at last subjecting their techniques of education to extensive reevaluation and were more willing to consider experiences in foreign countries.

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Khrushchev in the USA: Two Comments

Lenin and "Peaceful Coexistence"

IN HIS ARTICLE "On Peaceful Coexistence," published in the distinguished American quarterly *Foreign Affairs* on the eve of his arrival in the United States, Khrushchev said:

From its very inception the Soviet state proclaimed peaceful coexistence as the basic principle of its foreign policy. It was no accident that the very first state act of the Soviet power was the decree on peace, the decree on the cessation of the bloody war.[1]

Speaking at the National Press Club in Washington, Khrushchev asserted that Soviet policy is in full conformity with the principles which "were bequeathed to us by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the great founder of the Soviet state."[2] Lenin, he stated, was for "peaceful coexistence"—and so are the present leaders of the USSR.

Such assertions are not new to Khrushchev. At the end of 1955, when he and the former Premier, Bulganin, visited India, Khrushchev addressed the Indian Parliament in the following terms:

We are guided by the immortal teachings of the great Lenin, who held that the people of every country are entitled to live as they wish, without interference by other countries in their affairs. . . . We have never attempted to force our ideas of social reconstruction on anybody.[3]

And similarly in 1958, in reply to a question from the Australian editor of *The Herald*, John Waters, he stated:

. . . Over the span of more than forty years, Soviet foreign policy has been consistent—it has always been, is and will continue to be a Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence.[4]

Yet how truthful is Khrushchev's portrayal of Lenin's view on relations between capitalist and "socialist" states? How truthful is his claim that Lenin had always and consistently been in favor of "peaceful coexistence"? A cursory glance at the historical record supplies the answer to these questions—and the answer is in brief, that Khrushchev's claims are hardly in accord with the facts.

Let us first take, as an example, the "Decree on Peace" to which Khrushchev alluded in the article cited above. An examination of its text shows conclusively that it does not contain any deviation from the concepts on war and peace which Lenin had formulated at the start of World War I, and to which he steadfastly adhered till his death. A "democratic peace," Lenin wrote in January, 1917, "can be concluded . . . *only by proletarian* governments after they have overthrown the rule of the bourgeoisie and begun to expropriate it."[5] And on the very day Lenin drafted the Decree on Peace, he said in a speech before the Petrograd Soviet:

One of our urgent tasks is the necessity to end immediately the war. But it is clear to everybody that in order to end the war which is intimately bound up with the capitalist system, it is necessary to overcome capital itself.[6]

In other words, peace through war—"class war," that is. And indeed, the Decree on Peace itself spells out this principle in no uncertain terms:

. . . class-conscious workers [must] understand the duty that now lies upon them . . . and by comprehensive, determined and supremely energetic action [they must] help us to bring the cause of peace to a successful conclusion and, together with this, the cause of the liberation of the toiling masses from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.[7]

The Decree on Peace was only the first of a series of similar documents. On December 19, 1917, an appeal issued by the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs

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[1] *Foreign Affairs,* New York, October 1959, p. 3, (the issue came out prior to Khrushchev's arrival in the United States).

[2] *The New York Times,* September 17, 1959.

[3] N. A. Bulganin and N. S. Khrushchev: *Visit of Friendship to India, Burma and Afghanistan, Speeches and Official Documents* (in Russian), Moscow, 1956, p. 39.

[4] *Pravda,* June 25, 1958.

[5] V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniia* (Works), 4th Russian ed., Vol. 23, p. 202.

[6] *Ibid.,* Vol. 26, p. 208.

[7] *Sovetskii Soyuz v borbe za mir. Dokumenty i vstupitelnaia statia* (The Soviet Union in Struggle for Peace. Documents and introductory article). Moscow, 1929, p. 29.

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to the "toiling, oppressed, and exhausted peoples of Europe," openly admitted that the Soviet Government "does not consider the existing capitalist governments capable of concluding a democratic peace," and went on to say:

The revolutionary struggle of the working masses against the existing governments alone can bring Europe nearer to such a peace. . . . While entering in negotiations with the existing governments the Soviet government has set itself a double task: first, to bring an end as quickly as possible to the disgraceful and criminal slaughter which is laying Europe waste; and second, to use all means to overthrow the rule of capital and to seize political power.[8]

On December 30, 1917, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs again urged the peoples at war to sweep away their governments and promised "full support to the working class in every country who would rise in revolt against their national imperialists, against the chauvinists, against the militarists—under the banner of peace, fraternity of peoples and socialist reconstruction of society."[9]

EVIDENCE that the Soviet Government fully intended to make good on its promise to support revolutionary movements in other countries is contained in an extremely interesting document, quoted verbatim by the American journalist and Communist sympathizer, John Reed, author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*—a book which originally appeared with a preface by Lenin, then was relegated to the "memory hole" by Stalin, and which was recently "rehabilitated"—along with its author—by Khrushchev himself.[10] This document—a resolution passed by the Soviet Government on December 23, 1917, and signed by Lenin—made it plain that the Soviet Government "deems it necessary to come to the assistance of the Left International wing of the labor movement in all countries by all possible means, including funds, whether the said countries are at war with Russia, allied to Russia, or occupying a neutral position." Specifically, the resolution stated that "the sum of two million rubles shall be placed for the needs of the revolutionary internationalist movements."[11]

In the same article, Reed also revealed that early in November of the same year—that is, immediately following the Bolshevik *coup*—a "Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda" was established in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. This bureau had to be abolished shortly thereafter, in accordance with the provisions of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, but it continued to exist unofficially, as a "committee," its budget having in the meantime been augmented by twenty million rubles.[12]

The fact that the information regarding the "Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda" is not to be found in any official Soviet sources does not mean, of course, that the Soviet Government, under Lenin, was necessarily reticent about its revolutionary goals. There is, for instance, the official reply from Adolf A. Yoffe, first Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, to accusations of Soviet interference in internal German affairs. Charged with fomenting revolutionary outbreaks against the social-democratic Government which was formed after the overthrow of the Kaiser, Yoffe openly admitted the existence of a fund of ten million rubles "placed directly at the disposal of Dr. Oscar Kohn in the interests of the German revolution."[13]

It is evident that the comparatively forthright statements by Lenin and his associates in the early years of the Soviet regime are a source of acute embarassment for present-day Soviet "theoreticians," who are at pains to square their claims of "peaceful coexistence" with Lenin's call for world-revolution. Yet if square they cannot, falsify they can. A good illustration of this is a recent book on the aforementioned Decree on Peace, written by S. Yu. Vygodski. Writes Mr. Vygodski:

V. I. Lenin pointed out: "People live in states and every state lives in a system of states . . ." This means that the establishment of economic ties between individual states is an objective law that is valid independently of the will and desire of the peoples. It was the idea of indiscriminate cooperation, based on this objective law, that was decidedly pronounced in the Leninist Decree on Peace.[14]

As we have seen, the Decree on Peace "decidedly" did not constitute a pronouncement of "indiscriminate cooperation" (not even in the purely economic sense) with capitalist states, but—in addition to pressing for an end to the hostilities—was aimed at inciting the "toiling masses" against their governments. However, not even Lenin's speech of 1920 has anything to say about "indiscriminate cooperation" between the Soviet and capitalist governments. Here are three passages which convey the spirit of that speech:

As long as we have not conquered the whole world, as long as from the economic and military standpoint, we remain weaker than the capitalist world, we must adhere to the rule that we must know how to take advantage of the antagonisms and contradictions existing among the imperialists.

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[10] Khrushchev pictured Reed as "a remarkable representative of the American press," who "in 1917 paved the way to an objective understanding and description of our life for the West" (*Pravda*, February 16, 1958).

[11] John Reed: *"How Soviet Russia Conquered Germany,"* published in *The Liberator*, "Journal of Revolutionary Progress," January 19, 1919.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 19 and 24.

[13] *Izvestia*, December 17, 1918.

[14] S. Yu. Vygodski, *Leninski Dekret o Mire* (The Leninist Decree on Peace), Leningrad, 1958.

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Had we not adhered to this rule, every one of us would have long ago been hanged from an aspen tree, to the satisfaction of capitalists.[15]

What would have saved us still more would have been the war between the imperialist powers. If we are obliged to tolerate such scoundrels as the capitalist thieves, each of whom is preparing to plunge a knife into us, it is our direct duty to make them turn their knives against each other. When thieves fall out, honest men come into their own.[16]

Finally—and pithily:

. . . As soon as we are strong enough to defeat capitalism as a whole, we shall immediately take it by the scruff of the neck.[17]

As Stalin would have said: "Clear, one would think."

To round out the plethora of quotations, let us turn to an article which illustrates, perhaps better than anything else, the essential character of Lenin's "peace" policy: an introduction to a collection of Soviet documents covering the years 1917-1927, and published in 1929. Here are some relevant passages:

The entire grandiose peace activity of the Soviet Government, reflected in innumerable documents officially addressed to various governments or leaders of bourgeois countries, is essentially an appeal addressed over their heads to the multi-million masses of working and oppressed peoples of all parts of the world and, in the first place, to their vanguards — the international proletariat — who, by their class struggle and class battles, concretely and efficiently support this unprecedented peace activity of the first proletarian government in the world. In its peace policy, as well as in all its other activity, the Soviet Government, under the leadership of the Communist Party, carries out an offensive against the bourgeois world; struggles for influence on the wide multi-million masses; endeavors to imbue them with ideas which have inspired the workers and the peasants who have accomplished the greatest revolution, and calls upon them to actively check the resistance of the bourgeois world and to defeat it.[18]

The working people of the Soviet Union are firmly aware of the fact that the final triumph of their peace aspirations is possible only when imperialism will be disarmed and defeated by the international proletariat.[19]

THESE, THEN, are the facts concerning the "Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence." They show that Lenin's approach to the problem of "coexistence" with capitalist states had been subordinated to the concept of world revolution which he (along with Trotsky and all other leading Bolsheviks) expected to break out immediately after the October upheaval. When he realized that revolutions in the West were not forthcoming, he adopted a policy of tolerating "bourgeois" governments, in the hope that they would then be willing to render assistance to Soviet Russia, both in terms of credits and technological know-how. By taking advantage of the "antagonisms and contradictions existing among the imperialists," he expected to bring them in conflict with each other. Such a conflict, Lenin thought, would change the relations of forces in favor of the Soviet Union, making it strong enough to "defeat capitalism as a whole" by taking it—in his picturesque phrase—"by the scruff of the neck."

Dialectics aside, Lenin's view on foreign relations was a perfectly understandable one. Moreover, it was presented to the world in a startlingly forthright fashion. This forthrightness was completely abandoned by Stalin, who preached "world revolution" on the one hand and "peaceful coexistence" on the other, while at the same time engaging in cautious piece-meal imperialist aggrandizement (Lithuania, Latvia, Esthonia, Bessarabia, the East European satellites, etc.) Khrushchev now claims that Soviet foreign policy has nothing in common with aggressive aims. Whether this is so remains to be seen.

What is perfectly clear, however, is that Khrushchev's version of Leninism is, on the face of it, a radical departure from the original version. Whereas Lenin based his hopes on world-revolution—in the pristine and actual sense of the term—Khrushchev says no word about it. Whereas Lenin explicitly recognized Communist parties throughout the world as allies in the struggle for universal socialism, Khrushchev—in his pronouncements on "peaceful coexistence"—is uniquely oblivious of their existence. Whereas Lenin made no secret of his loathing for the "capitalist thieves," and called upon the "workers of the world" to overthrow them, Khrushchev—though of course voicing criticism of "capitalism"—nevertheless maintains that he has not the slightest intention to interfere with its course of development: history, he blithely and good-naturedly predicts, will "prove" which system is better (which system produces more butter? more meat? more sputniks?—etc.) Yet at the same time he calmly ascribes *his* views to Lenin—and thus engages in gross distortion.

The question might be raised, of course, whether Khrushchev's falsification of Lenin denotes his actual abandonment of Lenin's views and practices. To answer this question one can only borrow from Khrushchev by saying that only history will prove whether this is so. Surely he has thus far given little evidence that his words are to be taken at face value: his very tampering with Lenin's scriptures betrays an attitude towards truth which belies his protestations of frankness and sincerity.

The problem remains *why* he and his "theoreticians" so blatantly and crudely distort Lenin's views on "peaceful coexistence" (a term, incidentally, which Lenin *never* employed!). Without going into great detail, suffice it to say that if Khrushchev persists in distorting Leninism

[15] Lenin, *op. cit.*, Vol. 31, pp. 410-411.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 419.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 413.
[18] *Sovetski Soyuz v borbe za mir, op. cit.* p. 8.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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and in identifying himself with it (the two processes are intimately interrelated), it is because his position as chief of a totalitarian state dictates ideological continuity—in this case, continuity between the present theoretical formulations of Soviet foreign policy and the "holy" tenets" of Marxism-Leninism. Ideological continuity, in turn, of necessity involves distortion: the price which Khrushchev and his propagandists are ready to pay for maintaining an ideological bridge with the past is a deliberate misrepresentation of Lenin's views and practices. In this respect, at any rate, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

Lazar M. Pistrak

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An End to the Iron Curtain?

> *Let us extend our contacts. Let there be more exchanges of delegations. The only thing is that the State Department is rather afraid of that. . . Is it possible that you want to return to the Iron Curtain?*—(Khrushchev in a speech in New York, September 17, 1959).

"TO LIVE IN PEACE," Soviet Premier Khrushchev declared in his parting address before leaving the United States on September 27, "we must get to know each other better."[1]

This concept—that Soviet and American citizens must "get to know each other better" in the interests of mutual understanding and peace—was a theme which the Soviet leader stressed more than once during his historic American visit. Thus, in his first speech in the United States, delivered at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on September 16, he said:

All countries should also have close economic and cultural contacts between themselves. This will enable the peoples and their statesmen better to know and understand each other. This will make for the establishment of mutual trust and peaceful cooperation.[2]

[1] *The Washington Post,* September 28, 1959.

[2] Unofficial English translation of Khrushchev's speech at the National Press Club on September 16, 1959, issued by the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D. C., p. 7.

Again, when asked at his final press conference in Washington on September 27 whether he thought there would be "more progress now" in the development of Soviet-American ties in the cultural field, Khrushchev replied:

We shall not be behind in that respect. We have favored these contacts in the cultural field and would be prepared to develop these ties further, as long as the United States is prepared to do so too, on a reasonable basis.[3]

With such statements as these repeated over and over and widely disseminated by mass communications media, it is natural enough that hopes should rise, not only among the general public in the West but even among experienced students of Soviet affairs, for a further significant easing in the coming months of the Soviet government's restrictions on the flow of information and ideas between the Soviet Union and the non-Communist world. Indeed, such hopes have more to go on than mere verbal utterances by Khrushchev.

Ever since Stalin died in March 1953, the trend—despite much backing and filling—has been in the direction of greater cultural and informational interchange between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. So far as the United States in particular is concerned, the exchange of farm delegations with the Soviet Union in the summer of 1955 was an important milestone. It led to other exchanges, followed in early 1958 by the conclusion of a Soviet-American agreement on cultural and scientific exchanges which has now been in effect for nearly two years. The steady expansion of contacts culminated this year in the visits of First Deputy Premiers A. I. Mikoyan and Frol R. Kozlov to the United States and of Vice-President Richard L. Nixon to the Soviet Union, the exchange of Soviet and American exhibitions held in New York and Moscow, and the Khrushchev visit itself.

Exchanges of delegations and reciprocal visits by statesmen of both countries are, of course, only one aspect of increased informational and cultural interchange. Other important aspects include the renewal in the last several years of tourist traffic from the West into the Soviet Union and at least the meager beginnings of some Soviet tourist traffic to the West; increased access to the Soviet Union and coverage of Soviet affairs by American and other foreign journalists, writers, and observers (though offset by Moscow's continued enforcement of news censorship); the emergence of a new and more sane Soviet attitude toward Western culture in general, already foreshadowed by the abrupt abandonment, upon Stalin's death, of the campaign against "sycophancy before things foreign" and the recent abandonment of wholesale "jamming" of Western radio broadcasts in favor of what might be termed "selective

[3] *The Washington Post,* September 28, 1959.

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jamming" (though it remains to be seen how long it will remain "selective.") In short, there *is* some evidence that Khrushchev's remarks on the possibility of increased cultural exchanges between the Soviet Union and the United States (as well as Western countries in general) are meant in earnest.

NEVERTHELESS, despite the six-year trend towards an increased flow of ideas and information, and despite the likelihood that it will develop further, there are enough indications of the fact that the Soviet regime's willingness to lift the "Iron Curtain" is hedged by plenty of limitations. Khrushchev himself made some of these limitations amply clear during his visit to the United States. Since the things he said along these lines were not widely noticed, it is worthwhile reviewing them. They underline attitudes on the part of the supreme head of the Soviet Communist Party that are both revealing and rather fundamental.

When he met with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Khrushchev was asked by Senator Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois about Soviet censorship of American news dispatches filed in Moscow. He prefaced his reply by remarking, "A man can print anything he likes in your country. In our country, if a correspondent wrote an article advocating war, the article would be rejected and he would be placed on trial because there is a law in Russia against advocating war."

Khrushchev then stated that any articles written by American correspondents in the Soviet Union will be permitted if they are "conducive to peace." "Then you say censorship will continue?" asked Dirksen. "I would not call it censorship," replied Khrushchev. "What would you call it?" asked Dirksen. "Think of a name yourself," replied Krushchev.[4]

Khrushchev's next incursion into this field came in response to a question put to him at the dinner in his honor at the Economic Club in New York City on September 17. He was asked why, in the face of his professed desire that the Soviet and American peoples should get to know each other better, the Soviet government does not permit its citizens to listen freely to American broadcasts, to buy freely American periodicals, and why there is censorship of American news dispatches from Moscow.

Khrushchev started to give a reply obviously aimed at evading the question on the grounds that it was tantamount to "interference in internal affairs" of the Soviet Union. But this led to heckling from the audience, which needled Khrushchev into losing his temper, but also into giving the following more relevant answer:

The question of what our public listens to or reads should be decided not through or by any outside government or outside influence, but by our own people and by its government. You also jam American voices. I would refer to this unfortunate fact, for instance. Our people and a great many other people in the world like the great singer, Paul Robeson. Yet for five or seven years, I believe, the American government would not permit him to tour any other country to sing there. Why is that voice jammed? A world-famous voice. Well, we jam the voice with which some of you want to speak to our people. If the voice with which you broadcast to our country will be a friendly one, we shall not jam it. I think that should be clear.[5]

Another Khrushchev utterance on the subject of the informational Iron Curtain came in his San Francisco talk with a group of American labor union leaders. Asked about Soviet jamming of the Voice of America and other American radio stations, he countered in this fashion:

"What do you prefer to have for dinner?" he asked labor leader Paul Phillips.

"Probably roast beef . . ." replied Phillips. "I, borsch . . . ," said Khrushchev. "You continue to enjoy roast beef, and I, borsch." "But you prescribe and insist on borsch for all," Walter Reuther interjected. "As head of the working class, I will protect workers from capitalist propaganda," retorted Khrushchev.

At this point, according to the labor leaders' account, the Soviet Premier gave an impromptu demonstration of the dance from the motion picture "Can-Can" which he had seen being filmed in Hollywood the day before. He turned his back to the table, bent downward, flipped up his coat to show the seat of his trousers, and then continued:

You're going to see that, we are not. That's what you call freedom—freedom for the girls to show their backsides. To us its pornography. It's capitalism that makes the girls that way.

Only a few minutes later, in the course of another exchange, Khrushchev interjected, "We only publish speeches that contribute to friendly relations between countries."[6] By this criterion, the Soviet Premier could hardly have expected his preceding remarks about American "pornography"—or for that matter any of his attacks on American institutions—to see the light of day, either in the United States or in the Soviet Union.

IN THESE STATEMENTS by Khrushchev on a subject not often discussed in public by Soviet leaders or spokesmen, it is of particular significance that he twice asserts

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[4] *New York Times,* September 17, 1959, p. 22. For the Soviet version of these remarks, see *Pravda,* September 21, 1959, p. 1.

[5] *New York Times,* September 18, 1959, p. 21. The Soviet version of these remarks appears in *Pravda,* September 21, 1959, p. 1.

[6] *Summary of Meeting of American Labor Leaders with Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev of the USSR, Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco, September 20, 1959*—document issued by Walter Reuther *et al.,* pp. 13-14. The very different Soviet version can be found in *Pravda,* September 25, p. 1.

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firmly the right of the Soviet government to decide what Soviet people will listen to and read. His equating of free information with "war propaganda" or "pornography" is a fairly standard Soviet approach to the question of freedom of information, and is part and parcel of a rather obvious sensitivity manifested whenever this subject is broached. On such occasions, Khrushchev immediately attempts to divert the discussion to "pornography" or "war propaganda" or the question of Paul Robeson's right to travel abroad (long restored, incidentally, in keeping with a U. S. Supreme Court ruling). Indeed, he even attempts to turn the tables on the West, as he did in New York when he accused the State Department of wishing to restrict cultural exchanges —an accusation, as was later amply proved, which bears no relation to the truth.

The Soviet press, in reporting the exchanges related above, showed a similar sensitivity. For example, the question put to Khrushchev at the Economic Club in New York on jamming, Soviet access to American publications, and the like was not rendered accurately or fully.[7] Again, the statement credited to Khrushchev in the labor leaders' account of the San Francisco meeting, that "as head of the working class, I will protect workers from capitalist propaganda," was omitted entirely from the version of the talk published in the Soviet press.[8] Considerable editing of Khrushchev's other incursions into the subject of freedom of information during his American trip was similarly evident in accounts appearing in the USSR.

This editing of statements by Khrushchev himself points up, perhaps more vividly than anything else, the fact that no one, not even the Soviet prime minister, is exempt from the control which the system itself demands over what information and ideas shall reach Soviet citizens. Khrushchev acknowledged this himself when he stressed that it is the Soviet government that will decide what the Soviet people shall hear and what they shall read. Herein lies the fundamental limitation on the development of cultural and informational exchange between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.

There can be cultural exchanges, but *only* when they are worked out by the Soviet government and authorized by it. There can be a suspension or relaxation of the jamming of Russian-language radio broadcasts from the free world, but *only* when and for so long as the Soviet government considers it opportune or useful from the standpoint of its own or world Communist interests. There can be an exchange—such as Ambassador Lodge proposed —of a book on the history of the United States for one on the history of the Soviet Union, but only if the Soviet government decides that the American book is acceptable and does not pass permissible bounds in respect of propagandizing American "ideology."[9] There can be an exchange of exhibitions provided it takes place under official Soviet government sponsorship, and provided the American exhibition is subject to rules laid down by the Soviet government for the purpose of minimizing the impact on Soviet citizens of a glimpse of America.

Exchanges, Khrushchev stated, must be on a "reasonable basis." But it is the Soviet government which will define what the term "reasonable" means. So, even if Khrushchev's visit and the utterances and promises he made during it do give genuine reason for hoping that there will be increased cultural and informational interchange between the Soviet Union and the West, it is nevertheless quite clear that, so far as the Soviet government is concerned, this interchange will still be kept under close control and within whatever limits the government imposes.

THE "IRON CURTAIN" is a term of post-World War II currency and origin, but what it refers to is as old as the Soviet regime itself. One of the pillars of the Soviet regime is its monopoly over ideas and information—a principle that has been asserted with vigor from the first days of the Bolshevik government. This monopoly is based on the exclusive operation and control by the Soviet government, and through it by the Soviet Communist Party, of all media of mass communication. It would be quite unrealistic to expect the Soviet regime to permit any essential weakening of this monopoly on information.

Moreover, while there has been an appreciable—if firmly controlled—lifting of the Iron Curtain in some respects, in others it remains as tightly closed as ever. Ordinary Soviet citizens still are not allowed to travel freely to countries outside the Communist bloc, much less to emigrate anywhere they choose. At the same time, even though the barriers against foreign travel to the Soviet Union have been lowered to a marked degree, visitors from abroad still are subject to close control and surveillance as to where they may go and what they may see within the country. In the informational field, too, it is significant that the Soviet legal code still makes it a criminal offense punishable by seven years' imprisonment to "harbor" anti-Soviet literature—which could include any Western magazine, book, or publication of any sort containing criticism of the USSR.

All this leads to the conclusion that an end to the Iron Curtain is not yet, nor even dimly in sight. Indeed, as long as the fundamentals of the Soviet Communist system remain essentially unchanged, it would be unrealistic to regard its disappearance as even a remote possibility.

Thomas G. Whitney

Mr. Whitney is an American newspaperman who spent several years in the Soviet Union as representative of the Associated Press. He is now a free-lancer.

[7] *Pravda,* September 21, p. 1.
[8] *Pravda,* September 25, p. 1.
[9] *Pravda,* September 22, p. 2.

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The Soviet Economy—A Reply

MY ATTENTION HAS BEEN DRAWN to the July 11, 1959, issue of the *British-Soviet Newsletter*, published by the British Soviet Friendship Society. The larger part of that issue consists of an unsigned article entitled "Catching Up and Surpassing," which criticizes my "Communism in a Hurry: The 'Time Factor' in Soviet Economics" (*Problems of Communism*, May-June 1959) and compares it unfavorably with a Soviet article on a similar subject.[1] The remainder of the *Newsletter* is devoted to a short article entitled "The Fight for Quality —An Example" which has nothing directly to do with anything I have written, but which I shall have occasion to refer to below.

The critique of my article manifests such a naive tone of injured dignity—as if it were highly improper for anyone to take Soviet statements at anything less than their face value, or to suggest that the Soviet economy can be anything but perfectly rational and efficient—that it hardly merits a serious reply. However, it touches on several important substantive issues and betrays such a serious misunderstanding of some basic problems connected with the matter of "catching up and surpassing America" that perhaps some comment is in order. (I shall not bother, however, with such trivial, though perhaps revealing, points as the childish characterization of the United States as a "margarine civilization," whatever *that* is supposed to denote).

My anonymous critic ascribes to me certain views that could hardly have been obtained from a careful reading of my article. For example, I am charged with maintaining that Soviet planners have only recently become "time-conscious". If this means to impute to me—and I fear that many casual readers of the critique will take it that way—the view that Soviet planners have until recently not been conscious of the desire of the Soviet regime to expand industry at the most rapid pace possible, then it does not correspond to anything I wrote. Anyone with an elementary knowledge of Soviet history knows that both the Soviet leaders and the economists drawing up the periodic plans have been highly "time-conscious" in this sense from the very beginning. The point I tried to make in the article was quite a different one: namely, that it is only in the last year or so that authoritative sanction has been given to the *formal* incorporation of what the economist calls "time-preference" in the planners' calculations. And the paradox I pointed to is that "in a country which has proclaimed a race against time, the formal relation between economic value and time has been a bothersome theoretical problem and a drag on the efficiency of planning for several decades".

Unfortunately, my critic does not have a very thorough command of facts on the Soviet as well as on the American side. For instance, he denounces my statement that in 1939 the Soviet economy was in a stagnant condition—incidentally, I wrote "*temporarily* stagnant condition"—as "completely unsubstantiated by known facts". Let us agree on the meaning of words: "stagnant" connotes a condition of failing to grow, expand, or improve. There are innumerable "known facts" that support the view that the Soviet economy was just in such a condition that year. Let me refer, for example, to the official Soviet handbook on industry, published in 1957,[2] which contains data on the physical output of hundreds of individual industrial commodities. It is easy to discover that for very many of them the output in 1939 was substantially below that of preceding years. On the basis of these data, D. B. Shimkin has computed an index showing that total industrial output in the USSR in 1940 (a better year than 1939 in this respect) was only seven percent above the 1937 level;[3] and one should add that nearly all of this increase is explainable by the intervening expansion in territory. (Of course, the official Soviet production index does show considerable growth, but it is most suspect precisely for those years). Similar or more striking "known facts" can be adduced with regard to other sectors of the Soviet economy, such as agriculture, construction, and standards of living.[4]

My critic also receives with incredulity the point stressed in my article that comparison of the overall outputs of two economies, such as the Soviet and American, is (a) technically very difficult because of the lack of adequate data and the non-comparability of the figures for many individual goods, and (b) uncertain, because

[1] The Soviet article referred to was the lead article in *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 1959:6.

[2] *Promyshlennost SSSR*, Central Statistical Administration, Moscow, 1957.

[3] D. B. Shimkin and F. A. Leedy, "Soviet Industrial Growth," *Automotive Industries*, January 1958, Table I.

[4] A discussion of the Soviet economy during 1937-40 will be found in this writer's "Steel, Planning, and War Preparedness in the USSR," *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1957).

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there is no unique common denominator (set of weights) whereby to measure the two magnitudes in relation to each other. However, these problems are perfectly well known to Western economists and economic statisticians, particularly those specializing in study of the Soviet economy,[5] and there is no need to dwell on them again here, beyond referring the reader back to the discussion in my article (p. 4).

My critic should be reminded, however, that even Soviet statisticians often exhibit awareness of the "index number problem," as (b) is generally termed in the West. It is therefore doubly disturbing that Soviet economists and official spokesmen invariably ignore this serious difficulty of comparing the two economies when they speak about "catching up with and surpassing America." After all, what is the meaning of saying that Soviet Union will catch up with America in a given year, say 1970, if there are several widely divergent, but all equally legitimate, estimates possible as to the size of Soviet output relative to American output *today?* And lastly, to show that the "index number problem" is not merely a black anti-Soviet plot, let me refer to a recent calculation of the size of the Italian *per capita* national product in 1955 relative to the American. When the goods produced in the two countries are valued at American prices (of 1955), the Italian level is only 35 percent of the American; but when they are valued at Italian prices, the Italian level is only 20 percent of the American.[6] Question: if the Italian national product should suddenly start growing at some rate that is very much higher than the American, how soon will Italy "catch up with America" on *per capita* basis?

The last major point that I should like to comment on is the matter of efficiency. It is true of course, as my critic points out, that there is unemployment of productive capacity in the United States and none (almost none?) in the USSR. However, unemployment is not the only form of inefficient resource utilization; there are many others. Thus, for reasons deeply rooted in the system, Soviet enterprises tend to hoard materials, machines, and labor. It is yet to be shown that the few percent of the total labor force that on the average is unemployed in the United States represents a relatively greater waste of resources than does the hoarding of labor in the Soviet Union. Nor is this the only form of waste in the USSR. Rather than prolong the discussion, I shall simply quote from the other article in the same issue of the *British Soviet Newsletter*, pertaining only to the Soviet textile industry. "Mr. Trifonov, the Deputy Minister of Trade, gave some unpleasant figures. Customers do not want to buy serge, but even now it accounts for 60 percent of all the all-wool and half-wool fabrics being put out. . . . The Krasnodar mills turned out nearly 90,000 meters of 'Argon' tricot, which is commanding no sale at all. . . .[7] The Tambov Economic Council produced dark-colored cloths that were not in demand, instead of the light-colored ones that were." And so on for the rest of this article. No comment.

There is yet another aspect to efficiency: the setting of appropriate prices and the determination of rational calculating procedures to permit efficient allocation of resources in the course of planning. In the article I pointed to some progress on the part of Soviet economists in this direction, but noted that they still have a good distance to go and that certain doctrinal preconceptions stand in their way. My critic is surprised that I should doubt that "Soviet thinking is yet up to this task." Well, I am not alone in my doubts. Among those who share them are such knowledgeable and highly-placed persons as A. N. Nesmeyanov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, who said in his address before the 21st Party Congress last February:

> **I should like to emphasize particularly the importance of the tasks that face economics. One must say outright that in this field of knowledge our scientists have not lived up to the country's expectations. The solution of problems in economics clearly lags behind the needs of the swiftly growing economy and of the actual tasks of Communist construction.[8]**

Again, no comment is necessary.

Gregory Grossman

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[5] See, for example, the excellent discussions of these problems by Hans Heymann, Jr., and Robert W. Campbell in *Comparisons of the United States and Soviet Economies,* Joint Economic Committee, Washington, D. C., 1959, pp. 1-30.

[6] Milton Gilbert and associates, *Comparative National Products and Price Levels,* Organization for European Economic Co-operation, no date, Table 2, p. 23.

[7] However, these 90,000 meters—and no one knows how much more such cloth—are included in Soviet production statistics and as such "help" the Soviet economy to "catch up with America."

[8] *Pravda,* February 5, 1959, p. 5. Similar strictures can be found in the address of Academician Ostrovitianov, one of the most eminent Soviet economists (*ibid.,* February 6, 1959, p. 9).

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Correspondence

EDITORS' NOTE: Readers are welcome to send communications dealing with matters discussed in *Problems of Communism*. Letters should be addressed to the Editors, *Problems of Communism*, U. S. Information Agency, 1729 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 25, D.C.

COMMUNISM IN INDIA

While appreciating the amount of space given to a review of our book, *Communism in India*, in your March-April (1959) issue, we feel that the reviewer, Mr. G. S. Bhargava, has presented such a distorted version of its contents as to justify a reply.

The entire review is devoted to a refutation of Mr. Bhargava's own faulty version of one of the book's several conclusions. He incorrectly puts forward as our principal thesis "that an unheard-of 'constitutional communism' may emerge in India . . . that the CPI may eventually become more 'Indian' than 'Communist'." Our book treats such a development only as a remote possibility. On page 331 we quote Prime Minister Nehru as saying that if the Indian Communists think more in Indian terms "I have no doubt that the Communists will veer around more and more and the party will cease to be Communist in international lingo." Following this quotation we say: "Certainly such a development is possible, although, as Nehru himself has noted, CPI obedience to the fluctuating Moscow line on Yugoslavia would seem to indicate that it is still a long way off." On page 539 we state as the general conclusion of our work: "The CPI is neither monolithic nor unchanging, and it is sure to be shaped by future events in India and elsewhere. Up to now, its nature has been more Communist than Indian. But it has shown some flexibility and adaptability—especially in the realm of tactics."

Mr. Bhargava fails to note that throughout the book we treat the party's use of constitutional methods as a *tactic* rather than as a genuine commitment to parliamentarism, and that we document in great detail all of those instances when the CPI unquestionably followed the Moscow line. In cataloging some of those instances in his review he leaves the impression that they are missing from the book. Moreover, in at least one instance, he has managed to get his facts backward—it was the Communist group in prison in 1942 which favored the new line of "People's War" while P. C. Joshi, at large in India, opposed it. It was not the other way around as Mr. Bhargava states. He cites the correct page, but apparently did not read it very carefully.

Mr. Bhargava states that references in our chapter on front organizations "to the Government's efforts to swamp a Communist front like the India-China Friendship Association with its own officials and Congress Party members —and the use of this situation as an additional string to the authors' bow of 'constitutional communism'—again suggests a limited vision. If Colonel Nasser has not been able to dominate a front organization like the Asian African Solidarity Front (to which, incidentally, the authors do not refer at all), to expect of Nehru . . . to elbow out Communists from the India-China Friendship Association is to live in a fool's paradise."

Aside from the questionableness of drawing conclusions concerning India from undocumented assertions about the United Arab Republic, this statement fails to indicate that the book went to the publisher before data on the Asian African Solidarity Front was available in this country. We do describe its forerunner in India, the Conference of Asian Countries, held in New Delhi in April, 1955, and in fairness Mr. Bhargava should have mentioned this. But the important thing here is that our book points out, as no previous book has done, that government officials, like the Minister for External Affairs, and personages close to the government, like the former Ambassador to China, held offices in the ICFA from which they were able to prevent the organization from taking stands contrary to government policy. We think it is significant that Mr. Bhargava has stricken the above paragraph from the reprint of his review carried in *The New Socialist*, published in New Delhi for an informed Indian readership.

In Mr. Bhargava's view "the CPI is 'Indian' to the extent Moscow desires it to be and no more." While such gross oversimplifications may be of value as party polemics in India (Mr. Bhargava is a leading publicist of the Praja Socialist Party), we believe that they lead to dangerous underestimations of Communist strength, and when coupled with the language which Mr. Bhargava uses to attack us ("wishful thinking," "hugging their illusion," "fool's paradise") they do a disservice to your readers, to the subject matter, and to your journal.

University of California
Berkeley, California

Gene D. Overstreet
Marshall Windmiller

Mr. Bhargava replies: It is not my intention to take advantage of the events of the last six months to score a point over the authors. A mere recapitulation of the devel-

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opments leading to the dismissal of the Communist Government in Kerala and the more recent Sino-Indian border trouble and its impact on the CPI policies will reinforce my criticism of the book. Where the authors were content to see seeds of a new form of communism, I suspected camouflage and recalled the misuse of the democratic framework for totalitarian ends, rebutting in the process their optimism that Kerala had given the Communists "a vested interest in the parliamentary system." Philip Spratt, a former Communist leader and a close associate of the late Mr. M. N. Roy—he has nothing to do with the Praja Socialist Party, incidentally—corroborated my view in an article in *Thought* (Delhi). Like me, he also thought that the authors, by their stress on "the possible influence on the party of Gandhian ideas and of the experience in Kerala and perhaps elsewhere of working the parliamentary machinery . . . hope for further development [of Communist policy] in the same direction." If that is not the main thesis of the book, I stand corrected, though in bewilderment about the burden of the painstaking study.

The authors' second blind spot was China. I said that while the earlier work of John H. Kautsky had devoted space and attention to the duality of international loyalty of the CPI due to the emergence of Peking as an alternative locus of Communist power, the authors had overlooked it. Mr. Asoka Mehta, though "a restless politician" rather than "a composed scholar," concurred with me (in a review of the book for *The New Leader*, New York, July 6, 1959) that the authors failed to mention China "in the list of variables upon which Communist chances of success depend in India." In this case, at least, I trust the authors will not attribute the criticism to his PSP affiliation.

Incidentally, the fact that the section of the CPI which wants dissociation from Peking on the border question looks to Moscow for guidance and not to its moorings, if any, in the country, confirms my assertion that the "CPI is Indian to the extent Moscow desires it to be and no more." But it will be "undocumented" for the authors.

As for the wisdom of official patronage for a Communist *front* organization to prevent it "from taking stands contrary to Government policy" I once again beg to differ from the authors. To me such a policy is parallel to the Indian Ministry of Defense subsidizing a journal run by right-wing Communists. Who will corrupt whom time alone will tell but Communist capacity to undermine other loyalties is well known.

Finally, I am surprised that the authors, who noted the single "omission" of the paragraph dealing with the "peoples' war policy" in my review in *The New Socialist*, overlooked the additional points made in the latter. For instance, I had devoted more space in my second review to the constitutional changes in the CPI as described by the authors, and had also dealt with the question of Gandhian influence on the CPI—points which were not included in the review published in *Problems of Communism*. Moreover, how could the March issue of *The New Socialist* reprint a review appearing in the March-April issue of *Problems of Communism*, received in India only in April?

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